

July 6, 1996
COLUMN
China revives
panda diplomacy

Syria and Saudi military discuss cooperation

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlas discussed with a Saudi military delegation on Saturday ways of increasing cooperation and coordination between their armies. An official source said: "Talks during the meeting centred on bilateral issues of interest to both armies and ways to boost cooperation and coordination between them." The Saudi delegation will spend several days in Syria, the source said but gave no further details. A bomb attack in Saudi Arabia last month killed 19 Americans at a military complex in Khobar in eastern Saudi Arabia. Syria condemned the attack and voiced commitment to ensure Saudi Arabia's security.

Jordan Times

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King, Arafat meet

Jordan pledges full support for Palestinians

AQABA (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Saturday held a meeting at the Royal Palace in Aqaba and agreed on the need to resume the peace process in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

King Hussein pledged Jordan's full support for the Palestinians to gain their rights and establish their own state on their national soil, Petra said.

"Jordan supports the Palestinians and seeks to see the new Israeli government honour the accords that the previous government (of Shimon Peres) reached with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), including starting talks on the final status of the occupied territories, executing agreements agreed upon such as army redeployment from the West Bank town of Hebron," Petra quoted the King as saying.

"His Majesty King Hussein promised President Arafat that he will do all he can to press upon the Israeli government the importance of meeting its signed commitments with the Palestinians and that there should

not be turning back on what has been achieved," a senior Jordanian official said.

Palestinians want the Israeli government to fulfil agreements made by its predecessors to partially withdraw its troops from the West Bank town of Hebron and start talks on the final status of the Palestinian territories.

King Hussein and Mr. Arafat had 30 minutes of "productive talks" before heading to more expanded discussions with their full delegations over lunch, a Jordanian spokesman told Reuters.

The Palestinian leader wants King Hussein's help to arrange a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to start the promised Palestinian-Israeli talks on thorny issues such as defining borders and the future of Jerusalem, officials said before the Aqaba talks.

Mr. Arafat flew into this Red Sea resort city aboard an executive jet sent by King Hussein to fly him in from the Gaza Strip.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said Mr. Arafat's visit was aimed at coordinating policies in regard to the Middle East peace process. He did not elaborate.



His Majesty King Hussein, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti meet at the Royal Palace in Aqaba for talks centred on the peace process (photo by Yusef 'Allan)

Omar Khatib, chief of the PLO mission in Amman, said Mr. Arafat was seeking to enlist Jordan's support in his dealings with Israel.

"It is imperative to coordinate with Jordan so that it can press Israel to execute agreements already agreed upon such as redeployment

in (the West Bank town of) Hebron and to enter final status negotiations," he said. "If Israel did not carry out agreements already

reached, then the situation will be explosive in the Palestinian territories," he warned. Mr. Arafat later left Aqaba for Gaza.

U.S. to hear from Netanyahu this week

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States hopes new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu finally will explain how he plans to reconcile hardline stands and plans to continue the Mideast peace process.

In a recent meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, his first with a senior U.S. official since taking office, Mr. Netanyahu kept under wraps how his government intends to pursue the peace process.

But U.S. expectations are high for Mr. Netanyahu to be forthcoming in his first official visit to the United States. He is to arrive in Washington Tuesday.

According to U.S. ambassador to Israel Marwan Indyk, Washington acknowledges the new right-wing leader's priority of security for Israel but is becoming increasingly impatient with his vague policy statements. Five weeks after his election.

"The (Israeli) prime minister was elected on a mandate of peace and security. We have no problem with the concept," Mr. Indyk was quoted as saying in Friday's Jerusalem Post.

But he added: "It is obviously a question of how we go about achieving it."

While downplaying the differences between the United States and Israel, the ambassador pointedly stressed that "there are immediate issues that have to be dealt with."



Benjamin Netanyahu

Two weeks ago in Jerusalem, Mr. Christopher failed to convince Mr. Netanyahu to lay his cards on the table. Mr. Netanyahu made no solid pledge on the two most pressing problems: The continuation of

dialogue with Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from the city of Hebron in the West Bank, the next step under the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

Washington, which has invested considerable resources in the Mideast peace process, wants to be able to reassure its Arab allies, especially Egypt.

Saturday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said there were "divergences" in the views of Washington and Cairo on certain aspects of the peace process.

And Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's political adviser Osama Al Baz went so far as to accuse U.S. President Bill Clinton, who is facing a reelection bid in November in which the Jewish vote will be a factor, of being "readier than at any other moment to go along with Israeli views."

He warned that the United States must be consistent with its previously adopted policies, "otherwise it will lose credibility in the region."

Mr. Clinton meanwhile (Continued on page 3)

PNA releases 11 Islamists; Hamas calls for uprising

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The militant Islamic group Hamas called on Saturday for a new Palestinian uprising in Jerusalem and the West Bank town of Hebron.

"We extend our hand to our brothers in Fateh to renew the intifada in Hebron and Jerusalem, escalate the resistance and unite Palestinian, Arab and Islamic ranks to expel the occupiers from all of Palestine," Hamas said in a leaflet faxed to an international news agency.

It issued the statement in support of activists from the Palestine Liberation

Organisation's (PLO) mainstream Fateh faction in Hebron who called last week for a renewal of the intifada in the town from where Israeli soldiers were supposed to have partially withdrawn in March.

Palestinian security forces arrested Azmi Shuyoukhi, one of the leaders of the Fateh group in Hebron, on Thursday, his brother said.

Hamas said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's forces arrested Mr. Shuyoukhi in response to "humiliating Zionist pressure and conditions."

It demanded the release

of "all those arrested on suspicion of resisting occupation," a reference to hundreds of Hamas activists and supporters detained after Muslim suicide bombers killed 59 people in Israel in February and March.

"The self-rule authority has reached a dead end in pursuing peace and has no choice but to return to the people instead of throwing itself into the lap of the Zionists," the leaflet said.

Israel's previous government, led by Shimon Peres, signed an agreement with

(Continued on page 3)

U.S. considering troops redeployment in Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States, hoping to tighten security for its troops after a terrorist blast killed 19 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia, may redeploy forces from the Saudi capital, Defence Secretary William Perry said.

The redeployment would involve moving some of the 1,500 U.S. troops from Riyadh elsewhere in the

desert kingdom, Mr. Perry told reporters in Germany

on his way home from a visit with U.S. troops in Bosnia. But the defence secretary rejected suggestions that Washington might cut its overall military forces in Saudi Arabia, according to a transcript of his remarks made available by the Pentagon on Friday.

"We're not going to cut

and run from Saudi Arabia," he said.

"We are not planning a reduction in forces because of the bombing," U.S. officials were shaken by the June 25 bombing of a housing complex for U.S. military personnel in which 19 Americans were killed and hundreds more injured.

(Continued on page 3)

Zeroual renews call for dialogue

ALGIERS (AP) — Algerians marked 34 years of independence with a call by President Liamine Zeroual for new talks to end the North African nation's four-year insurgency. Mr. Zeroual appealed during Friday's independence day celebrations for a fresh "multilateral" dialogue with opposition parties, tentatively set for July 15. The Algerian government said a national conference on the future of the country, which won independence from France in 1962, likely would follow the talks. But Algeria's main Islamic opposition, the banned Islamic Salvation Front, will not be allowed to participate in the talks, raising little hopes of an imminent end to the country's bloodshed. The front was outlawed, and most of its leaders jailed or in exile, when Algeria's insurgency began in January 1992.

France turns \$65m in debt to Jordan into investment

AMMAN (J.T.) — The French government has decided to convert Jordan's commercial debts to France which amount to 325 million francs (\$65 million) into foreign investments in development projects in the Kingdom, according to an announcement by the French embassy in Amman Saturday.

The 325 million franc-debt represents commercial credits granted by French companies and guaranteed by the French government and the amount corresponds to 10 per cent of this category of debt ceiling as decided by the Paris Club, plus a part of the public aid to development, the embassy added in a statement.

At a meeting in June of 1994 the Paris Club has accepted to reschedule the whole of the Jordanian debt towards its members.

The move came in direct response to a request by His Majesty King Hussein to French President Jacques Chirac during the King's visit to Paris on May 6, 1996, said the embassy statement. It added that the French leader had expressed his government's readiness to help Jordan face its current economic difficulties.

According to the statement the French govern-

ment decided on the move during talks by a Jordanian delegation, led by Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan Michel Marto held in Paris on July 2.

Under the agreement debts eligible to this operation will be sold by the French Treasury to international investors wishing to invest in Jordan at a rate substantially inferior to its nominal value. Accordingly the financial effort from the French government amounts to 160 million francs or \$32 million, said the statement.

"The bids for investors will be opened for a long period of time starting from this summer in order to allow as much time as possible to investors wishing to propose projects," according to the statement.

"Both parties at the Paris meeting last week were extremely pleased with the conclusion of this agreement which puts an end to rounds of negotiations in the most friendly atmosphere."

By concluding the agreement "a major step has been taken in the development of the excellent relations between Paris and Amman."

Egypt arrests 18 militants

MARSA MATRUH, Egypt (AFP) — Egyptian police have arrested 18 people accused of seeking to organise a cell of the militant Gamaa Islamiyah group in this Mediterranean resort, the suspects' lawyer told AFP on Saturday.

The 18 were arrested last month in Marsa Matruh, 500 kilometres northwest of Cairo, on charges of "creating an organisation of the Gamaa Islamiyah and preparing plans against the government," the lawyer Mohammad Sameh said.

A 19th suspect, still at large, Ashraf Saad Al Nahas, was charged with leading the cell from abroad and providing it with orders and funds, Mr. Sameh said. In a fax received in Cairo, Mr. Nahas called the charges "a lie and a frameup," adding that he had been in Germany for the past three years "for studies."

All the arrested suspects denied the charges, except one, Abdul Basit Wair, who admitted the group had "held religious meetings to study the ideas of the Gamaa Islamiyah," Mr. Sameh said. "But there is no physical proof of any activity. Only religious books were found with the arrested," Mr. Sameh said. Mr. Nahas left Egypt after he was charged in 1993 with "preparing anti-government publications for distribution," Mr. Sameh said.

One of the 18 went berserk during interrogations, claiming to be married to a sorceress and possessed by a devil, a legal source said Saturday.

During interrogations, the suspect heard the sound of a call to prayer "and suddenly he went berserk and started speaking gibberish

in the voice of a woman," he said.

The suspect "claimed he had married a sorceress who had possessed him with a devil, who struck him whenever he heard the call to prayer," the source said.

His interrogators "had to run from the room to avoid injury because he was jumping around so much" in the throes of his possession, he said.

Meanwhile prosecutors demanded the death penalty for 15 militants and life imprisonment for 17 others accused of killing eight policemen and a village mayor in south Egypt, legal sources said.

The defendants are accused of killing General Mohammad Abdul Latif Al Shimi, deputy head of security in southern Assiut province, his driver and bodyguard and five other policemen in an ambush in 1993, the sources said.

The group, arrested the same year, also murdered Filis Butros, the Christian mayor of the Assiut village of Mutia, and "planned attacks on other important figures and security personnel," prosecutors charged. Cairo's supreme security court heard the prosecution's demand for sentences in a session on Saturday and ordered that the defence begin its case in a session the following day.

Seven of the 32 defendants are still at large and another, Gamal Abdul Hamid Abdul Nasser, was killed in a shootout with police last May. But the court has not yet removed the late Abdul Nasser from the list of defendants. He is among the defendants facing only life imprisonment.

Israelis go on sightseeing tours to Hebron 'hot spots'

HEBRON (AFP) — Coachloads of Israelis are going for day trips to see the "hot spots" of Hebron where their government's reluctance to withdraw troops has brought the West Bank town to breaking point.

On a blazing hot weekend, when the rest of Israel stayed at home or flocked to the beach, some 150 sightseers loaded down with cool boxes, cameras and sunhats trekked to Hebron to see at first hand the tension between Jewish settlers and Palestinians

here. "People think we're crazy to spend our Sabbath like this," said Haim Toledano of the Gush Shalom (peace bloc) movement, who organised Saturday's 15 shekel (five dollar) per head tour and others like it.

"But Israelis wouldn't normally dream of coming to Hebron, and most people haven't a clue what it's like. This is their chance to see the hot spots and understand."

Hebron is the last West Bank town still under Israeli occupation. Some

400 militant settlers live in the heart of the town alongside 120,000 Arabs in a constant state of tension. The day-trippers were given an official reception at Hebron town hall, where the Palestinian Mayor Mustapha Natshe told them: "Israelis are welcome here as tourists, but not as settlers." Mr. Natshe said leaflets were circulating in Hebron calling for a "new intifada" and warned: "We think it may happen if people in Hebron see nothing moving on the redeployment issue. Their

patience is at breaking point." Under the Oslo autonomy accords the Israeli army was supposed to withdraw by March 28, but the redeployment was postponed and the new right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to spell out what it plans to do. But if their welcome from the Palestinians was warm, the Israeli tourists had a hostile reception from their compatriots, the settlers and soldiers.

The highlight of their tour — a visit to the Tomb of the Patriarchs, holy to both

Jews and Muslims — was abruptly cancelled when the army declared it a "closed military zone" upon their arrival.

"Now you've had the real Hebron experience," the group's Palestinian guide said as soldiers wielding machine guns ushered them from the area and settler children gathered round singing "Hebron for now and forever." Mr. Dikla Van-Loobin, 25, a settler living in Hebron town centre, looked on in disgust. "God help them. They come to Hebron to make

provocations, that's all," she said. "They talk to the Arabs and try to turn them against U.S., which we don't want." Another settler, 25-year-old Oren Cohen, said: "We are confident the army will stay here and the Jews will live in the town forever. 'bibi' Mr. Netanyahu is good to the Jews." From there on the tourists were taken to Gamp at heavily guarded settler homes in the middle of Hebron and the large settlement of Kiryat Arba

(Continued on page 3)

Egyptian leftist party split in 'poetry war'

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's leftist opposition party has been split by a "poetry war" as feuding members have begun taking public shots at each other in scathing verse, the Arab daily Al Hayat reported Saturday.

The war in the leftist Tagammu Party erupted when Samir Abdul Baqi announced his resignation from the party's general secretariat last month in a poem published in the press.

The poem, titled "I bid you farewell," slammed the party leadership for "close-mindedness" and "backwardness", calling them "Mamlukes", adding, "maybe someday your humble servant's dreams will bring a knight to save you."

The party then shot back with an anonymous poem titled "You've done us a favour", waxing lyrical: "Go, Samir, the party

endures even if all pass on, as long as one warrior poet remains."

"You pretend to be a fighter, then tomorrow you go crying to the government minister," the poet snapped at its former 20-year member.

The Tagammu has been plagued by infighting since last November's parliament elections which other opposition parties complained were rife with fraud but in which the Tagammu won five seats.

Critics inside the party have accused Tagammu of toning down its opposition to curry favour with the government, especially after its Secretary General Rifaat Said was appointed by the president to the honorary upper house of parliament.

Round two of the poetry battle came when Mr. Abdul Baqi published a second poem, warning that

"those who show fear are dead" and accusing the Tagammu heads of entering "a public auction with the government" and "plotting on their masters' orders."

The party responded in another bit of doggerel, warning Mr. Abdul Baqi: "We know what your deal is — but your secret's safe with us, we won't expose you."

Finally, Al Hayat said, an unknown third party has stepped in, recently publishing an anonymous poem calling for an end to the versical potshots: "Wake up, Tagammu, get out of your mess, poetry is not for squabbling."

"If you were a party with men of worth, people's hopes would not have been lost/nor the workers' dreams killed at birth — by your own hands, you frauds," the unsigned poet gumbled.

UAE satellite to cost \$650m

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A commercial satellite project planned by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to upgrade its mobile telephone network will cost around \$650 million, officials said on Saturday.

Thuraya (chandelier), which has attracted key international firms, could include one or two satellites, to be commissioned in 1999, said Mohammad Othman, acting director general of the state-run Etisalat Telecommunications.

"The costs of this giant project are estimated at around \$650 million. Major international satellite manufacturers have been invited to present their bids," Mr. Othman told the economic weekly Al Eqtisadi.

Three companies from France and two from the United States are already battling to grab the deal, one of the biggest telecommunication contracts in the region.

Etisalat said on Thursday it had issued tenders for the project, which will make the UAE the first Arab country to have its own satellite. The system consists of geostationary satellites that will cover the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Officials from the French Alcatel company, which has formed a consortium of four world firms to win the contract, have estimated its cost at between 750 and one billion dollars, depending on its specifications.

Mr. Othman said the project would be financed through Etisalat's own resources and funds from a joint venture that will own the satellite.

"Etisalat is planning to set up a company comprising the subscribers to this system. We have gone a long way in our negotiations with those parties, which strongly support the project," he said.



PALESTINIAN FISHERMEN PUSH THEIR BOAT: Palestinian fishermen push their boat into the water on a Gaza beach Saturday. Fishing had become an important economic activity for the Palestinians during the Israeli closure (Reuters photo)

Khartoum has changed its 'tone' but not enough—opposition

CAIRO (AFP) — Sudan's Islamic government has "changed its tone" but has yet to abandon the policies which led to its isolation, the leading Sudanese opposition figure said in an interview on Saturday.

"There is indeed something suggesting that the government has changed its tone and has begun addressing the world and the West with a new, different language along with some action," Saadeq Al-Mahdi told the Arab daily Al Hayat.

"But the question remains concerning its sincerity, since the world has lost faith in much of what this regime says," said Mr. Mahdi, who was toppled as prime minister in 1989 by the coup which brought the

current government to power.

The government of President Omar Al-Bashir "has two options: To stick to its so-called 'principles of salvation' or to abandon them," he said.

"The 'principles of salvation' are the policies which led to Sudan's isolation, its interference in other countries and opening its doors to opposition figures from other countries," Mr. Mahdi said.

Khartoum has softened its tone since the U.N. slapped diplomatic sanctions on it in May for "supporting terrorism" and failing to extradite three militants accused in the June 1995 attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Sudan ejected a Saudi

businessman accused of financing militant activities and Gen. Bashir met in Cairo on June 23 with Mr. Mubarak in a bid to heal over their differences.

Mr. Mahdi called the Mubarak-Bashir meeting "a breakthrough of perhaps a step or two, but it will disappear if there is not a complete change in the Sudanese government's policies."

He also pointed to protests by the state-appointed head of Sudan's Labour unions federation, Taj Al-Sar Abdun, against a 10 per cent hike in wages, saying "the regime's friends have begun moving to the side of the people against the regime."

Israeli army under pressure to cut costs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli treasury is training it sights on the military's sizeable budget by seeking \$330 million in spending cuts in an attempt to curb the government's ballooning deficit, army radio said Saturday.

But the move is sure to spark a battle with the defence ministry, which is asking for a \$260 million budget increase.

Finance Minister Dan Meridor, who announced plans this week for \$1.5 billion of cuts in 1997 from the country's \$50 billion budget, wants to scale back the \$8.5 billion defence budget.

Plans are in place to lengthen the service of career soldiers — currently entitled to retire with full pension at 42 — and to cut salaries, benefits and manpower.

A total of 5,000 career soldiers have left the army

in the past four years under a rationalisation programme of the former Labour government.

But Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai insists there is no room for further cuts and is demanding increased spending to cover the huge cost of the 17-day offensive against Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon in April.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he wants to slash out a budget for 1997 before he leaves for Washington on Monday, and he is likely to rule over any dispute between Mr. Meridor and Mr. Mordechai at a cabinet meeting Sunday, said Army radio.

Military spending, which represented 7.8 per cent of the budget in 1996, includes annual aid from the United States of \$1.8 billion.

Yemen, Eritrea to have more talks on dispute

NAIROBI (AFP) — Eritrea and Yemen are to have more talks later this month on their dispute over the Red Sea islands of Hanish after making "important progress" in discussions this week, Eritrean radio reported Saturday.

Representatives of both governments discussed a draft protocol of arbitration in Paris, in the presence of a French government representative, earlier this week, the radio, monitored here by the BBC, said.

"They discussed the definition of the conflict, the question of sovereignty over the Zuqur-Hanish archipelago and the demarcation of the maritime border between Eritrea and Yemen," the radio, monitored here by the BBC, said.

Further talks will be held on July 18 and 19, the radio

added.

It did not say where the next round of negotiations will be held. The radio quoted French foreign ministry officials as saying the discussions were "friendly and constructive" and that there had been "important progress."

The French representative will also be present at the resumed talks, the radio quoted Eritrean foreign ministry officials saying.

Yemen and Eritrea signed a French-mediated agreement in Paris on May 21 calling for both sides to submit their dispute over the Hanish islands at the southern entrance to the Red Sea to international arbitration.

Eritrea captured the main island of Hanish-Aj Kabir in December during three days of fighting which left nine soldiers dead.

Cyprus calls for moves against 'Turkish abuse'

STOCKHOLM (R) — Cyprus on Saturday called for more practical steps by the international community to stop alleged human rights violations in the Turkish-occupied area of northern Cyprus.

Cypriot Deputy Isidoros Makrides told the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) fifth annual parliamentary assembly that renewed intervention was urgently needed as Turkey was ignoring international bodies.

"It's quite obvious that human rights violations are being undertaken... and this is a matter for direct and legit-

imate international concern and commitment," Mr. Makrides told the OSCE's general committee on democracy and human rights.

In 1974 Turkish troops landed in the north of the island in response to a coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

The Turkish republic of northern Cyprus remains recognised only by Turkey. Peace talks have repeatedly failed.

Mr. Makrides said over the past 22 years the number of Greek Cypriots living in the occupied area has plummeted to 5,000 from 20,000.

Home



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sat in the ceremony of the 16th Arab Child Queen dist. to young A

AMMAN (R) — At the closing ceremony of the 16th Arab Child Queen contest, Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday distributed certificates and awards to the winners from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen at the Royal Court.

The contest, presented by the Ministry of Education, aims to encourage children's creativity and their work.

PSD revives

AMMAN (R) — The Public Security Department (PSD) is reviving its tourist police unit and has recruited "qualified officers" who will enable the force to carry out its duties efficiently, a PSD official said Saturday.

The department will also be conducting training programmes to draw more recruits to this unit which will significantly serve the country's growing tourism industry, according to PSD Director Lieutenant General Ali Nasseh Muhammadin Saturday.

PNA release

(Continued from page 1)

The redeployment was delayed by the suicide bombings and Mr. Netanyahu has said he was still studying security aspects of the partial pull-out before deciding how to proceed.

Hebron Mayor Mustapha Karsh has warned of a general of the uprising in the town unless Israeli forces carried out the redeployment. The intifada, which began in 1987, largely ended with the signing of the Israeli-PLO peace deal in 1993.

In another development, the Palestinian National Authority has released 11 jailed Islamic activists in the West Bank, security sources said on Saturday.

U.S. consid

(Continued from page 1)

Plans to reassign some American troops were under consideration before the bombing, and we'll intensify that consideration, moving some of the forces out of Riyadh," U.S. and Saudi officials here agreed not to specify the number of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia for fear of

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt to set up radar system in Aqaba Gulf
CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will set up a radar system in the Gulf of Aqaba with European aid to prevent ship accidents, Public Sector and Environment Minister Atef Ebeid said, quoted by the daily Al Ahran on Saturday. Mr. Ebeid said the European Union had agreed to provide aid worth 12 million Egyptian pounds (\$3.5 million) "to track ships in the Gulf and prevent accidents," the paper reported. The minister said 2,400 ships a year pass through the gulf, which has seen 13 accidents over the past 11 years, "most of them due to pilots' errors."

False alarm forces airplane to land
LARNACA, Cyprus (AP) — An Emirates airlines Boeing 777 on a flight from Dubai to London made an emergency landing here Friday because of a fire warning that later turned out to be a false alarm. Civil Aviation Department Director Stelios Vassiliou said the aircraft, with 299 passengers and 16 crew, resumed its flight to London two hours later after a check indicated nothing wrong. The plane was about 10 minutes' flying time east of Larnaca airport when a signal lamp in the cockpit indicated smoke in the cargo hold.

Opium stashed in goats' stomachs seized
TEHRAN (AFP) — Police in southeastern Iran have seized over 13 kilograms of opium hidden in the stomachs of two goats, newspapers reported Saturday. Police-men on patrol stopped two men walking the goats in Zabol region of Sistan-Baluchestan bordering Afghanistan after becoming suspicious and took the animals for autopsy. The drug was fed to the goats in plastic bags. Amid a crackdown on drug trafficking, many smugglers have also been swallowing them to avoid detection.

Kurdish rebels kill two soldiers
ERZINCAN, Turkey (AP) — Kurdish guerrillas raked a

military sentry post with automatic gunfire, killing two sentries on duty in this eastern city, the Anatolia news agency said on Saturday. The attack occurred late Friday, it said. The guerrillas, whose 12-year-old fight for autonomy mainly is waged in the rugged mountains of Turkey's southeast, have recently begun to stage attacks in urban areas. A Kurdish suicide bomber killed seven soldiers in eastern Tunceli city a week ago.

NATO welcomes suspension of drills
BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO urged Greece and Turkey on Saturday to build on an agreement to suspend military exercises in the Aegean Sea, where the two NATO members came close to war last January. Both countries declared this past week that they would refrain from air and sea manoeuvres in the Aegean Sea until Sept. 1 — in effect making the area safe for summer tourism. The idea had been proposed by NATO Secretary General Javier Solana "in an effort to contribute to a reduction of tension... during the peak tourist period," NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
15:05.....Cartoon — The Mask
15:30 Tennis Wimbledon Men's Singles Final
17:00.....News Flash
17:02.....Tennis Wimbledon
19:00.....Le Journal
19:15.....Sports et Musique
19:30.....News Headlines
19:35.....Cinema, Cinema
20:00.....The American Quiz Show
20:45.....Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
21:10.....Black's Magic
22:00.....News in English
22:25.....Film: "Fatal Return" (pt 1)

PRAYER TIMES
03:57.....Fajr
05:31.....(Sunrise) Duha
12:40.....Dhuhr
16:21.....Asr
19:50.....Maghreb
21:24.....Isha

CHURCHES
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Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 625286
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St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with temperatures slightly above average and winds northwesterly moderate to active. Temperatures are expected to rise on Monday and Tuesday becoming above average. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman.....23/33
Aqaba.....25/39
Deserts.....20/36
Jordan Valley.....24/39
Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 33, Aqaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh.....819220
Dr. Ruhi Sukkar.....856457
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shikha.....752405
Yousef Al Faqih.....790104
Firas pharmacy.....661912
Ferdows pharmacy.....778336
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055
Nairokh pharmacy.....623672
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730
Yacoub pharmacy.....644945
Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660
Najib pharmacy.....847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazin Abu Bakir.....276852
Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rabah Al Bourini.....990312
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre.....637111
Civil Defence Department.....661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....25/39
Civil Defence.....630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police.....192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade.....617101
Blood Bank.....775121
Highway Police.....843402
Traffic Police.....896390
Public Security Dept.....630321
Hotel Complaints.....605800
Price Complaints.....661176
Water & Sewage Complaints.....897467
Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121
Overseas Calls.....010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101
Radio Jordan.....774111
Jordan Television.....773111
J. Electricity Authority.....815615
Electric Power Co.....636381
RJ Flight Information.....08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre.....813813/32
Khalidi Maternity.....64281/6
Akilieh Maternity.....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362
Maltas, J. Amman.....636140
Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071
Shmeisani Hospital.....669131
University Hospital.....845845
Al-Muasher Hospital.....667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3
Al-Bashir.....775111/26
Army, Marka.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50
Amal Hospital.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital.....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital.....(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital.....(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital.....(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital.....(03)314111

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:15.....Dhahran (add) (RJ)
09:30.....Jeddah (RJ)
09:55.....Larnaca (RJ)
10:05.....Riyadh (RJ)
10:10.....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20.....Beirut (RJ)
10:50.....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:05.....New York (RJ)
16:55.....Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
18:25.....Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:50.....London (RJ)
19:25.....Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
19:30.....Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
20:15.....Paris, Vienna (RJ)
20:15.....Athens (RJ)
20:25.....Rome (RJ)
20:30.....Tunis (RJ)
20:40.....Vienna (RJ)
22:50.....Frankfurt (RJ)
01:10.....Cairo (RJ)
Other Flights
06:30.....Tel Aviv (LY)
11:00.....Sanaa (YV)
12:30.....Doha (Q7)
13:40.....Bahrain (GF)
15:05.....Moscow (SU)
16:30.....Dubai (EK)
20:35.....Cairo (MS)
21:10.....Beirut (ME)
22:15.....London, Beirut (BA)
23:20.....Istanbul (TK)
23:30.....Athens (OA)
01:20.....Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
02:30.....Belgrade (GU)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:50.....Aqaba (RW)
19:45.....Tel Aviv (RW)
HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman.....8:00 a.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus.....7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman.....5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apricot.....750/500
Apple.....700/500
Banana.....600/600
Banana (mukhammar).....520/520
Banana (imported).....120/80
Cabbage.....300/220
Carrot.....140/80
Cauliflower.....300/220
Cucumber (large).....120/80
Cucumber (small).....200/120
Eggplant.....210/150
Garlic.....650/400
Lemon.....800/500
Marrow (large).....150/100
Marrow (small).....240/160
Mulukhiyah.....130/80
Onion (dry).....130/80
Okra.....850/600
Orange.....480/300
Pea.....480/350
Peach.....670/400
Pepper (hot).....340/220
Pepper (sweet).....400/280
Potato.....300/180
String Bean.....450/300

07:45.....Beirut, London (BA)

ROYAL WINGS (RW) Flights
10:00 Amman (arriving at Marka Airport from QAIA) (RW)
20:30.....Aqaba (RW)

Dep. Amman.....8:00 a.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus.....7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman.....5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apricot.....750/500
Apple.....700/500
Banana.....600/600
Banana (mukhammar).....520/520
Banana (imported).....120/80
Cabbage.....300/220
Carrot.....140/80
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Onion (dry).....130/80
Okra.....850/600
Orange.....480/300
Pea.....480/350
Peach.....670/400
Pepper (hot).....340/220
Pepper (sweet).....400/280
Potato.....300/180
String Bean.....450/300



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday hands a child a certificate and a gift at the closing ceremony of the 16th Arab Children's Congress (Petra photo)

16th Children's Congress ends Queen distributes certificates to young Arab delegates

AMMAN (J.T.) — At the closing ceremony of the week-long Arab Children's Congress (ACC) at the Royal Cultural Centre, Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday distributed certificates and gifts to 90 children from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, a Royal Court statement said.

The children presented the outcome of their work-

shops, which had been held at the Royal Scientific Society, the Haya Cultural Centre and the Jubilee School, on the evolution and development of science and technology in the world as well as on creative methods in learning computers, drama, painting and music.

They performed a song and dance as well as a short dramatic skit before Queen Noor toured their exhibition of stamps, art and literary work.

The proceedings of this

year's conference will be published in the ACC's magazine which will be distributed throughout the Arab World.

Queen Noor was received by Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufti, the Director of Morale Guidance at the Jordanian Armed Forces, Executive Director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation Ibrahim Badran and members of the NHF Board of Trustees.

PSD revives tourist police unit

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) is reviving its tourist police unit and has recruited "qualified officers" who will enable the force to carry out its duties efficiently, a PSD official said Saturday.

The department will also be conducting training programmes to draw more recruits to this unit which will significantly serve a particular category of the country's growing tourism industry, according to PSD Director Lieutenant General Nasouh Muheiddin Saturday.

Gen. Muheiddin said that police officers stationed at the border posts and crossing points with Israel are there to provide facilities to travellers and will be required to work extra hours in three-day shifts around the clock in order to service tourists arriving or departing from Jordan.

He said that in addition to stationing tourist police at the border crossings and at the bridges on the Jordan River, these officers are also deployed at archaeological sites to lend assistance to tourists and visitors.

Gen. Muheiddin said the PSD's former tourist police unit was limited in its service by programmes set by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. He said the new unit will be particularly helpful in the summer, Jordan's peak season for tourism and visits from Arab nationals from other parts of the world.

He added that summer usually brings many social occasions of large attendance such as weddings, and university graduations, and therefore the workload of the police force in general is increased.

PNA releases 11 Islamists

(Continued from page 1)

the PLO to pull soldiers out of most of Hebron with the exception of areas where some 400 Jewish settlers live.

The redeployment was delayed by the suicide bombings and Mr. Netanyahu has said he was still studying security aspects of the partial pull-out before deciding how to proceed.

Hebron Mayor Mustapha Natsheh has warned of a renewal of the uprising in his town unless Israeli forces carried out the redeployment. The intifada, which began in 1987, largely ended with the signing of the Israel-PLO peace deal in 1993.

In another development the Palestinian National Authority has released 11 jailed Islamic activists in the West Bank, security sources said on Saturday.

They said the men, most of them from the Hamas, were freed in the Palestinian-ruled town of Jenin late on Friday.

It was not immediately clear if the move was the start of the gradual release of hundreds of arrested Hamas members.

Up to 900 people were detained in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the crackdown ordered by Mr. Arafat. Some were released soon after their arrest but hundreds remained in prison.

A total of 84 Islamic activists were arrested in Jenin at the time.

The Palestinian legislature decided last week that its interior and security committee would study each detainee's file to recommend to the security forces whether to charge or release him.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian minister of communica-

tions left the Gaza Strip on his way to Iran Saturday, where he will participate in a communications conference of Muslim countries and will meet with Iranian officials.

Imad Falouji, a former leader in the Hamas movement, joined the Palestinian government as an independent. He left Hamas last December, after declaring his candidacy in the first Palestinian elections in January for the 88-member governing council. Hamas boycotted the elections, because the group opposes the Israel-PLO agreements that led to Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Falouji went from the Gaza Strip to Egypt and from there plans to fly to Iran. He is expected to stay in the Islamic state for three days, and to hold meetings with senior members of the Iranian regime.

U.S. considering troops

(Continued from page 1)

Plans to reassign some American troops were "under consideration before the bombing, and we'll intensify that consideration, moving some of the forces out of Riyadh," Mr. Perry said.

U.S. and Saudi officials have agreed not to specify the number of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia for fear of

inflaming radical Muslim groups who oppose their presence.

But American sources familiar with the operation estimate the number of U.S. troops in the country at around 5,000.

U.S. troops are in Saudi Arabia to enforce a no-fly zone over southern Iraq, in effect since the end of the Gulf war.

The defence secretary

himself has drawn sharp criticism from some legislators, with one senator calling for Mr. Perry to resign over charges that Washington failed to press hard enough for tighter security at the bombed housing complex.

The June bombing followed a smaller attack in November that killed five Americans and two Indians.

WFP to fund \$15m production scheme

AMMAN (Petra) — The World Food Programme (WFP) plans to allocate \$15 million to help Jordan in its food production programme for the next five years starting in 1997, Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat announced Saturday.

Returning to Amman from the WFP meetings in Rome, where the organisation is based, Mr. Shneikat said that final approval of the project is expected at a meeting of WFP donors scheduled for October. At that time a formal agreement is expected to be

signed by the WFP and Jordan.

The WFP has been financing food production projects in the Kingdom since the 1960s.

Under the proposed agreement, the organisation will provide funds for new projects to be initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), said Dr. Shneikat.

The new project includes the development of the highlands through fruit and forest tree cultivation, pasture land development and

domestic projects for homesteaders in the rural regions.

The minister said WFP has also promised to help in solving problems connected with earlier highlands projects, but he did not elaborate.

During the five-year projects in the rain-fed highlands regions, WFP financial aid was used to purchase food commodities for Jordanian farmers while they worked on developing their lands.

These projects were designed to help farmers increase their agricultural

production and reduce soil erosion.

They often entailed construction of stone fences and contour terraces and the drilling of artesian wells and fencing off planted areas.

During his Rome visit, Dr. Shneikat met with the FAO Director General and discussed Jordan's needs to develop its agricultural sector.

He said he obtained a promise that an FAO expert will visit Jordan in the coming months to present the country with a special laboratory for the analysis of

chemical residues in fruits and vegetables that will help ensure safe produce for exports.

The FAO Director General, said Mr. Shneikat, also promised to finance short-term training programmes for Jordanian personnel in boosting agricultural production.

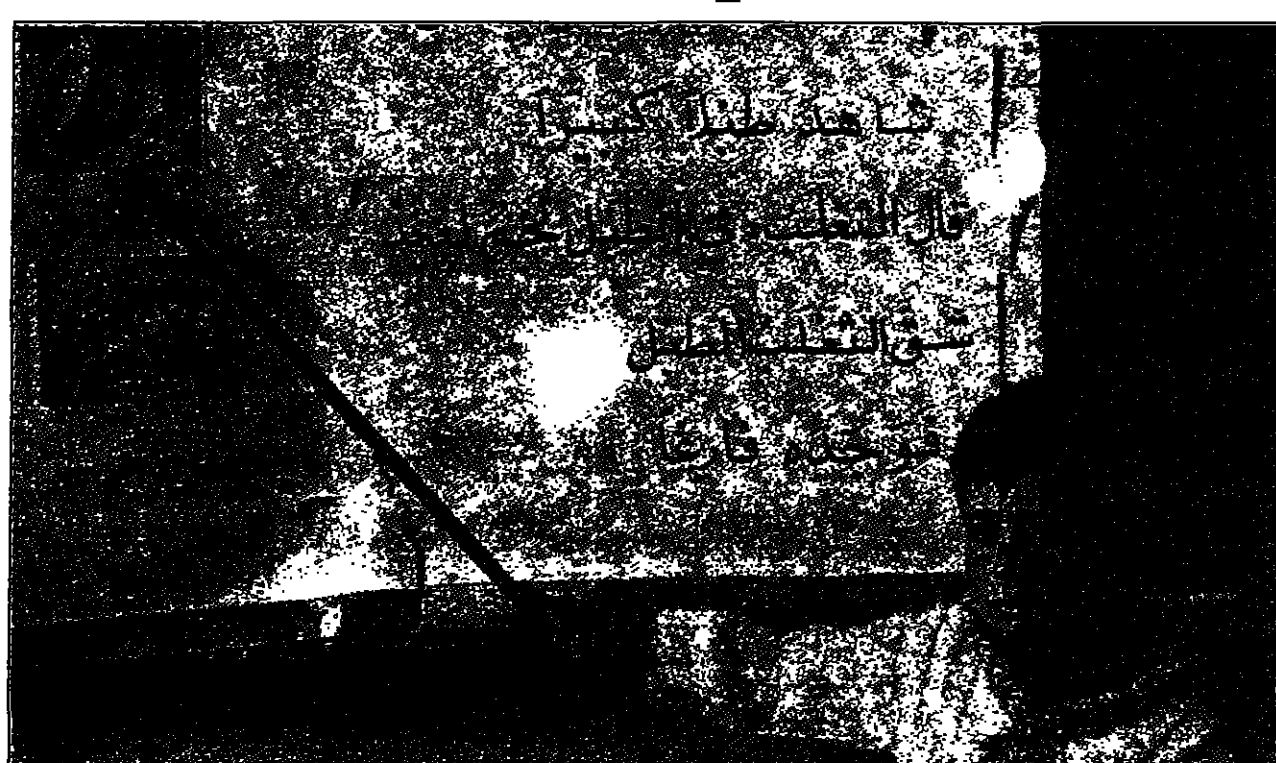
He said the FAO chief said that the organisation had planned to open a representative office in Amman but financial reasons forced a delay in this plan over the past two years.

Host countries, Arab League seek to raise \$20m for education in occupied Palestine

DAMASCUS (Petra) — The Arab League and the five countries hosting Palestinian refugees have decided to form a fund-raising delegation that will visit Arab states in order to raise \$20 million to finance educational projects in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian lands, said Mohammad Aser, Jordan's delegate to a meeting held last week in Damascus to discuss education in Palestinian lands.

The educational situation in the occupied Arab lands, and Israel's repeated closures of Arab universities and schools and the restrictions on students' movements were at the heart of the June 26 to July 3 discussions by delegates from Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt in addition to representatives of the Arab League, said Mr. Aser.

According to Mr. Aser, the delegates reviewed reports on the educational situation in these areas, including the status of schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). He said that in the address he delivered on behalf of Jordan, as a host state, he stressed that UNRWA's educational services to the refugees should be continued and supported by all



A young Palestinian refugee stands before his classroom and points to an illustration in a reading comprehension exercise at a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school. UNRWA's biggest regular programme is education. The agency funds elementary and junior secondary schools and vocational and teacher training centres, and provides university scholarships for refugees (UNRWA photo)

countries until a comprehensive and just settlement to their problem has been reached.

Also in his address Mr. Aser said, he reviewed the government's assistance to the refugees in Jordan in educational, social, health and other services. He said

he emphasised Jordan's determination to pursue its assistance to the Palestinians at all levels to alleviate their sufferings and to promote their educational system.

The delegates also reviewed Israel's drive to Judaize Jerusalem and dis-

tort historical facts about the city.

They decided to reprint books about Jerusalem and its history in different languages with the purpose of defending Arab national rights before the world community, Mr. Aser said.

The delegates agreed to

recommend to the Arab states that they recognise Palestinian school and university certificates and degrees and request that the Arab League help establish schools in Palestine for talented students and offer Palestinians scholarships to study at Arab universities.

U.S. to hear from Netanyahu this week

(Continued from page 1)

continues to support Mr. Netanyahu publicly while seeking to appease the growing impatience of U.S. allies, within and outside the region.

Mr. Clinton tried to deflect implicit criticism of Mr. Netanyahu at the recent Group of Seven industrialised nations summit, which also was attended by Russia.

At the meeting in Lyon, France, the president emphasised the need to give the new Israeli government some time and advised other countries not to say anything that could complicate the peace process.

That warning was clearly aimed at Israel's Arab neighbours. Arab countries, at a summit late June in Cairo called in response to the election of the Israeli hardliner, threatened to rethink their gradual normalisation of relations with Israel if it tried to change

the rules of the game.

U.S. officials recognise that Mr. Netanyahu's government poses a problem for Washington on at least two fundamental issues: His rejection of any territorial concession to Syria, the land-for-peace principle on which the Middle East peace talks were launched in 1991 in Madrid, and the desire to develop existing Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The U.S. administration has long maintained that encouraging Jewish settlements would complicate peace negotiations. But that has not stopped Mr. Netanyahu's predecessors, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, from doing it.

U.S. diplomats also recall that the accords on Palestinian autonomy were signed at the White House. A way of advertising that Washington risks losing its status as peace broker if it acts in too accommodating a fashion towards Mr. Netanyahu.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian cabinet minister close to President Arafat urged the United States on Saturday to speak out against Mr. Netanyahu's hardline policies.

"We don't hear the U.S. administration talking about the principle of land for peace or the illegitimacy of the Jewish settlements in (the West Bank and Gaza Strip)," local government minister Saeb Erekat told Reuters.

Mr. Erekat, a senior adviser to Mr. Arafat, lashed out at what he called Washington's "blind bias" towards Israel, three days before Mr. Netanyahu's inaugural visit to the United States.

"We have justified fears for the peace process not only on the Palestinian track, but all tracks," Mr. Erekat said. Urging Washington to press for a resumption of Arab-Israeli negotiations, he said: "This is the role of a sponsor of peace."

Israelis go on sightseeing tours to Hebron 'hot spots'

(Continued from page 1)

where some 4,000 Jews live just outside the town. An extremist settler from Kiryat Arba, Baruch Goldstein, gunned down 29 Palestinians at prayer in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in February 1994.

The visitors were also

taken to Hebron's Arab market and main street, both closed since the massacre, a source of great resentment in the Palestinian community. Mr. Gabbi Ezer, a gas company worker from Galilee in northern Israel, said: "I came on this tour because I was curious. I believe Jews should stay in the city but how can I have opinions if I haven't

seen it with my own eyes?" Sarah, 72, who would not give her second name, said: "It's very sad. It reminds me of the British mandate when we Jews were under armed protection from Arab gangs."

"I came to express solidarity with the Palestinian people, and to show them that not all Jews are terrorists."

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAYS

Two plays entitled "The Birds of the Night" and "Hanging" (in Arabic) respectively at 8:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

LECTURES

"The Arab Nationalist Movement in Iraq 1958-66" (Arabic) by Amin Al-Hilli from Iraq at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabbal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Ceramics and paintings exhibition by Fayer Al-Shirazi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until July 11.

Black and white paintings exhibition of works completed in half a century (1913-1960), entitled "Hundred Days" at the French Cultural Centre, until July 20.

Ceramics exhibition at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagra (Tel. 69914372) until July 25.

Abstract (plastic) art by Arab women artists at Balad Art Gallery, Oudh Street (Tel. 687981), until July 11.

JOB VACANCY

A long established company operating in Amman - Jordan has a vacancy for the following positions:-

- 1- Mechanical engineer - 2 years experience.
- 2- Electrical engineer - 2 years experience.

Candidates should be of Jordanian nationality, with an excellent command of both Arabic and English and member of the Jordanian Engineers Association.

CV and all certificates to be sent to:-

P.O. Box 851454.
Amman 11185 - Jordan.
Attention: The General Manager

Critics attack Indonesian government on democracy

JAKARTA (R) — An array of dissident figures and groups threw their weight behind beleaguered opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri Saturday, accusing President Suharto's government of stamping out its democratic rivals.

Ms. Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's late founding President Sukarno, was ousted as the leader of the opposition Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) at a rebel congress last month which was backed by the government and the military.

"Here, the showcase of power to divide PDI is played nakedly and transparently by the government. We protest against the government's interference in the PDI conflict, which has already gone too far," the dissidents, grouped into nine organisations, said in a petition faxed to Reuters Saturday.

Those signing the petition include Ali Sadikin, a former Jakarta governor, and

Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, a daughter of Sukarno and sister to Ms. Megawati.

The petition was signed Friday, the same day as State Secretary Mardiono confirmed that President Suharto planned to travel to Europe Sunday for a medical check-up.

Rumours that he was ill sent a shudder through Indonesian markets and analysts said Saturday concerns would hang over regional stock and currency markets in the coming week.

Resentment against Mr. Suharto's firm rule has smouldered in the wake of the PDI congress which elected a rival leader, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Surjadi, as chairman.

Ms. Megawati opposed the congress and has refused to give up the party's headquarters, now guarded by hundreds of her supporters.

The congress was followed by violence, including street battles between

more than 5,000 pro-Megawati activists and security forces on June 20 in which about 100 people from both sides were injured.

The rival factions are now gearing for a legal showdown after Ms. Megawati this week filed a \$1 trillion rupiah (\$22 billion) lawsuit against the government and her opponents.

Saturday's petition follows a similar expression of support by a group of intellectuals, including the chairman of the 30 million-strong Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Muslim organisation, Abdurrahman Wahid, issued earlier this week.

"Justice and the power which has become more centralised and exclusive has created the culture of violence," the group said in a statement. Also signing the statement were Bambang Trihantoro, a former chief of socio-political affairs in the armed forces, and M. Kharis Suhud, a former parliament speaker.

Mr. Wahid has said he would stand behind Ms. Megawati.

Some political analysts say the government backed the rebels because it feared Ms. Megawati would draw votes from the ruling Golkar Party during elections next year and perhaps contest the 1998 presidential election against six-term incumbent Suharto.

Mr. Suharto rose to power in the mid-1960s following an abortive coup bid blamed on the Communist Party.

Diplomatic and political analysts have said Mr. Suharto is under pressure to seek a seventh successive five-year term in 1998.

The Christian-nationalist PDI is one of three parties, along with Golkar and the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP), legally permitted to contest elections in Indonesia. Parliamentary elections are due by June next year.

China rebuffs Taiwan call for talks

BEIJING (R) — China rebuffed Saturday a proposal from rival Taiwan to resume long-suspended talks, saying the island must prove it is committed to the principle of a single China, but Taipei insisted negotiations come first.

China's quasi-official Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait that handles ties with Taiwan issued its response to Taipei's call in a note sent to its Taiwan counterpart, the Straits Exchange Foundation, Friday, state media said.

It repeated a June 22 statement in which the association told Taiwan to "take action without delay as the first step under the principle of one China to end the hostile situation, between the two sides... and hold talks with us."

"Our association is willing to see the Taiwan side make a response to this above proposal at an early date. This is the most pressing matter," it said.

Taiwan called on Beijing this week to start mutual visits across the strait by officials of the two organisations that handle talks in the absence of official ties, saying either side could make the first step.

The semi-official talks began in 1993 amid a thaw

in relations but have been suspended by Beijing since June 1995 when Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui urged China with a high-profile but private visit to the United States.

A furious Beijing cited that visit as evidence Mr. Lee wanted Taiwan's independence and not reunification with the mainland.

It has demanded that Taiwan offer concrete deeds, rather than words, to prove its commitment to eventual reunification.

In Taiwan, senior officials said it was unlikely in the light of China's rebuff that talks could resume for some time.

"In the near term, the cross-strait deadlock, especially on talks, will not be easy to break through," Jan Jyh-Hong, a director of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council told state radio.

Talks on an exchange of visits and ending hostility appeared to be impossible in the face of China's demands, he said.

However, as long as talks could get started "both sides can talk about the meaning of the controversial 'one China' principle and even other political topics", the United Evening News quoted Shih Chi-Ping, deputy secretary-general of the

Straits Exchange Foundation, as saying.

"But the point is to resume talks first," Mr. Shih said.

A Taiwan negotiator said this week it was unlikely the talks would resume by the end of 1996.

Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a rebel province, not entitled to a state government or to international recognition, since the nationalists fled to the island after losing China's civil war in 1949.

China has said Mr. Lee is merely paying lip service to his government's avowed goal of reunification with China and is secretly pushing the island toward independence.

It has been enraged by Mr. Lee's pursuit of "pragmatic diplomacy" — or unofficial visits to countries where Taipei has no diplomatic ties that are intended to raise the island's international profile.

Beijing rattled Taiwan with war games and missile tests in waters near the island in the run-up to the island's March 23 presidential election in what Beijing acknowledged was a bid to intimidate Taiwan voters against independence.

Top U.S. aide upbeat on ties with Beijing

BEIJING (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton's top security advisor arrived in Beijing Saturday for a crucial visit aimed at patching up the recent rifts in Sino-U.S. relations and testing the waters for a bilateral summit.

National security advisor Anthony Lake, who is scheduled to hold high-level meetings with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng, Defence Minister Chi Haotian and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, sounded an upbeat note on his arrival at Beijing International Airport.

"In the last two months we have made real progress in improving our relations as we have worked through issues regarding non-proliferation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)," Mr. Lake told reporters.

Washington has twice this year come extremely close to sanctioning Beijing for allegedly selling nuclear technology to Pakistan and for failing to crack down hard enough on rampant piracy of American copyright materials.

"There are still differences between U.S. in areas such as human rights and non-proliferation and some trade issues, but we are making great progress," said Mr. Lake, who will spend three full days in Beijing.

All of Mr. Lake's top level meetings have been scheduled for Tuesday, with both the Chinese and U.S. sides declining to reveal his itinerary for the first two days.

However, he is expected to meet the head of China's negotiating body with Taiwan.

Much to China's chagrin, Washington sent two aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in March as Chinese war games — aimed at frightening Taiwanese voters away from pro-independence ideas — got underway.

War-like rhetoric from China prompted Washington to cancel an already-postponed visit by Defence Minister Chi Haotian and the episode drew difficult Sino-U.S. ties into further chaos.

However, Mr. Lake pointed to the recent vote in Congress for renewal of China's MFN, "shows that we are developing in the United States a real consensus behind policies of engagement with China," Mr. Lake said.

Indian premier hold talks in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda met with mainstream Muslim politicians here Saturday as a general strike to protest the premier's visit to Kashmir gripped the troubled valley, witnesses said.

Mr. Deve Gowda, who arrived here amid high security, is the first Indian prime minister to tour Kashmir since 1989 when Muslim militancy erupted in the frontier Himalayan region.

The prime minister, who heads the coalition United Front government installed June 1, met with Kashmir's six newly-elected MPs and 40 other politicians for talks on the prospects of holding a state government election here, they said.

"The prime minister is believed to have offered a package (of incentives) to Kashmiris ahead of the proposed election in Kashmir," a state government official said.

Shops and businesses were shut and private vehicles were off the roads in Srinagar in response to a strike called by the Harkat-ul-Islam Momin group, which denounced Mr. Deve Gowda's visit.

"The prime minister is visiting with the chief objective of forcing assembly elections," said spokesman Abdul Gani Lone of the Freedom Conference, which groups several Muslim political and militant groups.

The Freedom Conference and a smaller group, the Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen,

called for protest demonstrations across the valley Saturday.

India held national parliamentary elections in Kashmir in May for the first time since 1989. Four of the state's six federal seats were won by the Congress (I) Party of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

The others went to the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party) of Mr. Deve Gowda and the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata (Indian People's) Party.

Despite the strike, officials here say Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, was ready for state assembly elections as many Kashmiris were fed up with the militancy which has destroyed the region's tourist trade.

The polls are expected in September or October before the onset of winter. Kashmir's pro-India National Conference Party, which boycotted the federal polls, is expected to fight the state assembly election.

Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, a former Kashmir chief minister, said that in his talks with Mr. Deve Gowda he put forward his party's demand for increased autonomy for Kashmir.

"We also demanded compensation for those who have been affected by the militancy in Kashmir," he added.

Earlier Saturday, the 63-year-old prime minister was received by army officials at a military base after he flew in on a helicopter and

landed at the heavily-guarded airfield 35 kilometres (21 miles) south of here.

Indian authorities placed thousands of security men on alert in Srinagar — Kashmir's summer capital — after Muslim separatists called for the shutdown which paralysed life in the region.

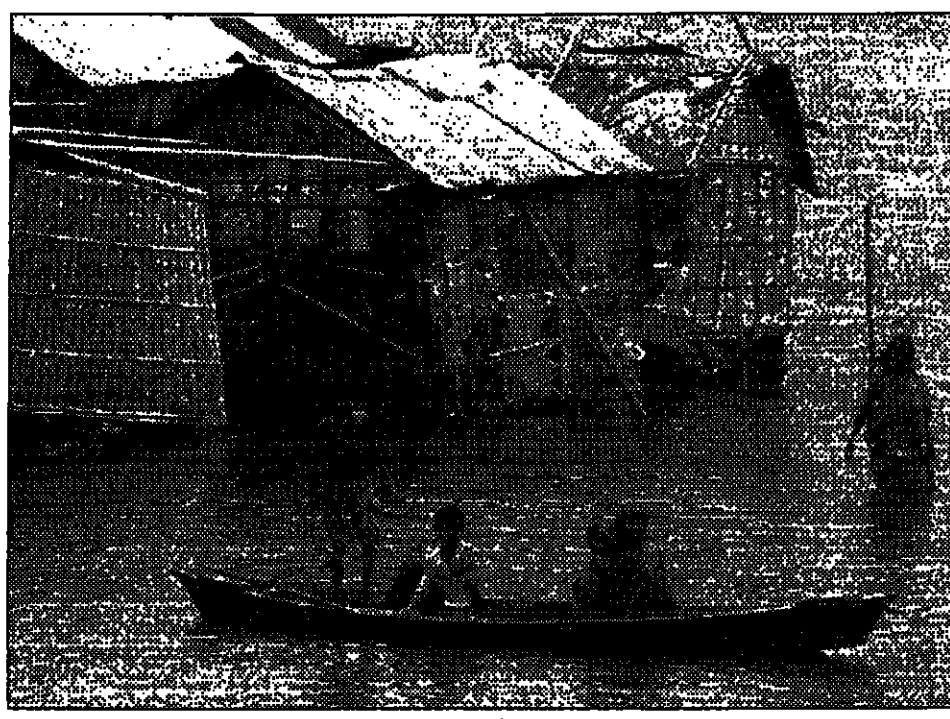
But there were no protests as Mr. Deve Gowda toured a military hospital packed with soldiers wounded in the running military campaign against Muslim guerrillas.

He also joined a motorcade to reach the office of State Governor K.V. Krishna Rao. Kashmir's chief administrator, for official talks, witnesses said.

The prime minister also toured regions ravaged by floods that have left 43 people dead in the state. He will return to New Delhi on a special aircraft late Saturday evening.

Mr. Deve Gowda's tour here is officially described as a visit to survey flood damage in Kashmir, but Muslim militants said he was preparing the ground to hold elections to the Kashmir assembly for the first time since March 1987.

The United Front government has promised increased autonomy to Kashmir in a bid to end the separatist campaign which has left more than 12,000 people dead in the state since 1989.



Flood victims in Dhaka are evacuated by boat for high ground. The floods, sweeping 16 districts across the country have killed 12 people and left thousands marooned (Reuters photo)

Dhaka under threat as flood recedes in some Bangladeshi districts

DHAKA (AFP) — Parts of central Bangladesh including the capital, Dhaka, are under threat of being flooded, officials said Saturday, although the situation is improving in the northeast of the country.

Monsoon rains might be "very active" again in next two days, Mohammad Alam Mia, an official at the Flood Information Centre said.

More rain would worsen an already bad situation in Bangladesh, where up to 72,000 people have been marooned or left homeless in one week from heavy

rain and rushing hill water flowing down from the north of the country.

The swelling Ganges River crossed the danger mark Friday evening at Bhagayakul, some 50 kilometres south of Dhaka. "If the water level continues to rise, low lying areas of Dhaka may be inundated in a day or two," the flood centre said.

However, officials said the situation in some of the 16 districts ravaged by flash floods this week started improving, with lesser rains in the past two days in the

northeastern region. But rivers, including the Brahmaputra and the Ganges, continued to rise in the north of the country.

No fresh flood deaths were reported Saturday. Earlier reports said six people, including three children were killed in the flooding.

With 230 rivers running through this low-lying country, Bangladesh is plagued by annual floods. In 1988, more than 2,200 people were killed by floods, the worst toll in 40 years.

Police ban Orange march in N. Ireland

PORTADOWN, Northern Ireland (R) — Northern Ireland police Saturday banned a controversial march by the Protestant Orange Order through a Catholic section of Portadown, setting the scene for a potential showdown between marchers and police.

Sir Hugh Annesley, head of Northern Ireland's Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), told a Belfast news conference that allowing the Orange march through the Catholic Garvaghy Road area would cause serious public disorder.

"I can't see there is anything rational in leading an Orange parade down a road where it will receive significant and sustained opposition. Therefore we must try to keep both sides apart," Sir Hugh said.

His decision set the scene for a re-run of last year's parade which was punctuated by clashes between thousands of Orange men and police trying to keep them away from the Garvaghy Road area of Portadown, 40 kilometres south of Belfast.

"Even at this late stage, it is not too late for accommodation to be reached. For the well-being of all concerned, I sincerely encourage both sides to reappraise their stance in pursuit of a peaceful resolution," he said.

The predominantly Protestant area has been festooned with red, white and

blue bunting and Britain's Union Jack flag to mark one of the most cherished dates in the Protestant calendar.

The Portadown parade is the penultimate showpiece in the Orange "marching season" which culminates on July 12 with marches and bonfires marking the 1690 victory by King William of Orange over the

invading Catholic monarch King James II.

Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA, says such marches are triumphalist and inappropriate and insult Irish nationalists in the 40 per cent Catholic minority.

The Orange Order, a 200-year-old fiercely pro-British organisation, warned police all this week that it was determined to go ahead with the original plan for its Portadown parade, as it has done for several years.

Sir Hugh's decision will allow the Orange marchers to parade from the centre of Portadown to a church service in the nearby village of Drumcree but will bar them from returning to Portadown through the Garvaghy Road area.

Germany issues warrant over IRA bombing of British base

BONN (R) — Germany has launched a hunt for "Mike," "Mark" and red-haired "Beth" — three of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) squad believed to have carried out last week's attack on a British military base.

An arrest warrant named the top suspect as Michael Robert Dickson, a 31-year-old British citizen who rented a holiday home where mortar bombs were prepared before being fired at a British army barracks in Osnabrueck on June 28.

German investigators released his picture and description — stocky build, 168 cm (five feet six inches) tall, brown eyes, blond hair. It said that he spoke German and was known as "Mike."

"Strong evidence has been uncovered that the suspect is a member of a provisional Irish Republican Army active service unit of at least five people which was responsible for the mortar attack on Quebec Barracks, Osnabrueck," said a state-

ment issued by the German Federal Prosecutors Office.

A spokesman for prosecutors told Reuters that the suspect identified as Dickson was believed to be the leader of the IRA group. It said he left the continent Sunday heading back for Northern Ireland.

No one was injured in the attack on the barracks but cars and buildings were damaged. The home-made mortar bombs were launched from a van which investigators found nearby.

It was the IRA's first attack on the European continent since before the 17-month ceasefire the guerrillas scrapped in February.

Police also appealed for public help in finding a man and a woman, believed to be Dickson's accomplices. The man known as "Mark" was aged 20 to 25, tall and slim with dark wavy hair and dark brown eyes. The woman, "Beth", was aged 20 to 25, up to 160 cm (five feet three inches) tall, slim with red hair. Police released photo-fit pictures

of both.

The statement said Dickson had rented the holiday home hideout near Oldenburg in northern Germany from June 15 to 28. It was discovered by investigators Monday.

The prosecutors' statement said Dickson was the owner and registered user of a white Rover car and hired two of the vehicles believed to have been used to plan and carry out the bombing.

They were a green truck which covered about 700 kilometres from June 24 to 26 and a small green Mercedes van which was returned to the company on the night before the bombing.

Investigators have found three more vehicles which they believed had been used by the IRA group. One of them, a van, was brought by ferry to the French port of Le Havre from Ireland along with the van used to carry out the attack.

Judge orders autopsy on Menem's son

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A judge ordered Friday that an autopsy be carried out on the remains of President Carlos Menem's son Carlos, who died in a 1995 helicopter crash that his mother insists was not an accident. Judge Carlos Villafuerte issued the order after repeated appeals by the president's ex-wife Zulema Yoma, mother of the deceased. Ms. Yoma has insisted that the crash in which her son died while at the controls of the chopper was not an accident but an attack. The incident took place near the city of Ramallo north of Buenos Aires. Authorities have said the crash was an accident. The autopsy is to be performed July 12 at the National Academy of Medicine.

Chimpanzee proves stock market winner

WARSAW (R) — A chimpanzee from the Krakow Zoo earned a 10 per cent return on a three-month investment choosing stocks on the Warsaw Bourse, beating a respectable local brokerage, the daily Gazeta Wyborcza reported Wednesday. At the start of the second quarter in April the chimp, Karolina, chose five tangerines from more than 70 bearing the names of firms on the exchange's main market. Karolina's portfolio beat the return on treasury bonds, a bank deposit, the dollar and participation certificates in Poland's National Investment Fund (NFI) mass privatisation programme. Karolina's choice also beat those of a Wyborcza reader, who earned 3.9 per cent, and those of Krakow-based Magnus Brokerage, which earned 7.5 per cent. "Our defeat was caused by the democratic method through which six employees of our analysis department chose stocks, among other things," Wyborcza quoted Magnus's Pawel Hominski as saying. But Karolina trailed five other analysts and brokerages as well as the main market's Wig Index, which rose by 19 per cent. She was stung by her choice of construction firm Espebepe, which fell 35.1 per cent over the period after drastically revising down its 1995 earnings report.

Briton fined for stealing London pigeons

LONDON (R) — A young Briton has been fined £475 (\$700) for stealing pigeons from Trafalgar Square in central London. Jason Lidbury, 18, was told by magistrates he was threatening one of the capital's most popular tourist attractions. Lidbury put up to 40 of the birds in a box at a time, a London court was told Monday. Police arrested him in the square in March, when he said he was hoping to sell them to his uncle, who kept racing pigeons.

Shocking divorce for would-be husband

PARIS (AFP) — A French electrician hoping to get married received a shock when he learned he was not only already wed but also divorced, the daily Le Parisien reported Saturday. The 30-year-old popped into his local town hall in Paris to find a copy of the birth certificate he needed for the nuptials when he discovered he had, in fact, already tied the knot. Not only had he got married in 1990, he had been divorced three years later and his wife, also 30, was living south of Paris. Police detained her last week and found she was indeed legally married, but to a man who had usurped the identity of the electrician. Le Parisien said she wed to acquire French nationality and both she and her husband had been questioned by police.



China floods ei... The... In ce... 16 pe... More... had b... been c... Offi... Jiangs... official... organ... provin... swept... floods... tal se... China... More... and lo... mobil... China floods ei... The... In ce... 16 pe... More... had b... been c... Offi... Jiangs... official... organ... provin... swept... floods... tal se... China... More... and lo... mobil...

Tajikistan o denies losin

BRAN (AFP) — A... said Fi... was ag... hand al... Interior... the ne... launch... day... He... exchan... timing... most of... been di... ra... The... which... attacks... bounding... since... power... Dara... which... from... Council... More... troops... offens... BRAN (AFP) — A... said Fi... was ag... hand al... Interior... the ne... launch... day... He... exchan... timing... most of... been di... ra... The... which... attacks... bounding... since... power... Dara... which... from... Council... More... troops... offens... BRAN (AFP) — A... said Fi... was ag... hand al... Interior... the ne... launch... day... He... exchan... timing... most of... been di... ra... The... which... attacks... bounding... since... power... Dara... which... from... Council... More... troops... offens...

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Chimpanzees proves stock market winner



Shanghai cyclists make their way along flooded streets. Heavy rain in southern China have left over 250 people dead and thousands homeless (Reuters photo)

China floods engulf 5th province; troops on alert

BEIJING (R) — Villagers across southern China worked to rebuild their homes Saturday and replanted crops washed away by some of the worst floods in more than a century while hundreds of thousands of troops and militia stood guard.

Taiwan's Red Cross was sending \$200,000 in emergency aid, while the Red Cross Society of China has donated 400,000 yuan (\$48,000) to five flood-stricken provinces where at least 253 people were killed and tens of thousands left homeless.

Damage across the four southern provinces of Guizhou, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangxi had surpassed \$2.0 billion and many areas faced a bleak harvest with newly-planted rice and corn seedlings washed away by the raging waters and 1.35 million hectares (3.3 million acres) swamped.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs said China would not appeal for international aid but would accept assistance.

In central Hubei province, torrential storms had caused flooding in 320 villages and towns, damaging about 30,000 houses and killing 16 people, most of whom died when their homes collapsed, an official of the provincial anti-flood and drought office said.

More than 120,000 people had been sent to restore about 41 highways that had been cut, he said.

Officials in neighbouring Jiangxi said government officials were helping organise farmers in the province to rebuild homes swept away by the flash floods that followed torrential storms across southern China since last weekend.

More than 500,000 troops and local militia had been mobilised in southwestern

Guizhou to help with rescue work and as a frontline to stand guard along river embankments and dykes in case of more flooding, the Liberation Army Daily said.

Flood control officials in Guizhou said the floods would reduce harvests this year, but added that farmers were already racing to replant rice and corn seedlings or to replace the crops with sweet potatoes.

At least 3,708 people had been injured and tens of thousands left homeless after the collapse of 211,000 houses in four provinces. As many as 15 million people had been affected and 560,000 evacuated.

Flood waters were starting to recede as the rain stopped and People's Liberation Army troops and workers were rebuilding roads and restoring communications.

In Qimen county in central Anhui, residents had barely time to run from their

homes before flash floods swept through whole villages, one local official said.

He described storms early this week that dumped 400-700 mm in five days as the worst since 1824.

Vast inland lakes covered many areas and villages were marked by roof tiles breaking the surface, he said, adding that torrents with a speed of 3,500 tonnes per second had engulfed some villages. At least 39 people were killed.

In Guizhou, storms dumped 291 mm of rain on the province in just two days — a record since 1921 — and floods and landslides had killed at least 136 people.

Troops had rescued more than 100,000 people stranded by the rushing waters. More than 17,000 houses collapsed and 10,000 people left homeless were sheltering in schools.

Russian Communists seek new role after defeat at polls

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian Communists and their allies met for a post-mortem and strategy talks Saturday after the defeat of their presidential candidate Gennady Zyuganov, as the Kremlin prepared to form a new government.

The talks were expected to include a debate on whether to join a new government led by current Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who was confirmed in his post after Wednesday's election, in which President Boris Yeltsin beat Mr. Zyuganov by 13 per cent.

Mr. Zyuganov said his "Popular Patriotic Bloc" — an alliance of more than 200 organisations spearheaded by the Communist Party — would not join the government if it continued "pursuing its old course," the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

He said the initiatives he put forward before the second round run-off election served as the basis for a possible coalition.

Before his election defeat, Mr. Zyuganov called for a coalition government made up equally of his followers, the present government and representatives of other groups in parliament.

In a victory address to the nation, Mr. Yeltsin appealed for reconciliation, hinting that the Communists might be invited to join a new government.

"In the new team, there will be room for everybody. Let's not divide the country into victors and defeated," he said.

Mr. Chernomyrdin ruled out a formal coalition with the opposition, saying there could not be a working government "when everyone is defending the interests of his party."

But he did not explicitly reject the idea of giving portfolios to Communists, insisting only that the new



Alexander Lebed, President Boris Yeltsin's national security adviser and secretary of the Security Council, answers questions from reporters after his visit to the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations Saturday. Gen. Lebed paid a visit to the ministry to check its readiness (Reuters photo)

government, to be named soon, must consist of "professionals" prepared to work hard.

Mr. Zyuganov said after the election that "if the government is professional and honest, I could enter it," but added that there would be no moves until Mr. Chernomyrdin's future policies were clearer.

Alexander Rutskoi, head of the left wing nationalist Derzhava Movement, favoured joining the government Saturday.

"If government posts are offered we must go to work," ITAR-TASS quoted him as saying.

Anatoly Lukyanov, a senior Communist Party member, told the Interfax News Agency that Mr. Zyuganov's left-wing alliance "will continue the fight to create a coalition government of national trust which reflects the interests of all layers of society."

"In a country split in two, where 40 per cent of voters

supported the left wing bloc, one party or one president alone cannot resolve the problems facing Russia," he said.

There has been growing speculation that after Mr. Zyuganov's defeat some members of his party may push to abandon the name "Communist."

However, Mr. Lukyanov, one of the alleged masterminds behind the abortive hardline coup in August 1991 against then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, rejected such suggestions.

"As long as I live I will oppose that, because Communists of the new generation have no reason to be ashamed of their past or repent to anybody," he said.

Mr. Zyuganov meanwhile told the daily Kommunist that "one person alone cannot decide on the party's name — there is the party presidium, a

plenum, a congress."

As Mr. Zyuganov's supporters mulled over strategy, the Kremlin was facing a potential conflict over division of powers between Mr. Chernomyrdin and the National Security Advisor Alexander Lebed, as well as a dangerous budget shortfall.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said urgent measures were needed to redress a total shortfall of 75 trillion rubles (\$15 billion) in the federal and regional budgets.

He also bluntly insisted that he would not relinquish any of his powers to Gen. Lebed. Mr. Yeltsin's new security supremo, who has given himself a broad remit including economic security.

Gen. Lebed, a popular retired general who came third in the first round of the elections, has called for tighter controls over exports of raw materials and has accused oil and gas bosses of massive profiteering.

Tajikistan opposition leader denies losing strategic town

TEHRAN (AFP) — A leader of the Tajik Islamic opposition denied here Saturday losing the strategic central town of Tavil-Dara to government forces.

Akbar Turjanzadeh, the deputy-head of Tajikistan's National Islamic Movement, said the rebels were still holding the town, situated 200 kilometres east of the capital Dushanbe, after capturing it almost two months ago.

"This is a mere lie. Government forces tried but failed to even capture an inch of Tavil-Dara," he told Iran's Islamic Republic news agency (IRNA).

Mr. Turjanzadeh, who is based in Tehran, said rebels had killed 700 government troops and captured 513 others in the latest fighting.

A spokesman for the Tajik

presidency, Zafar Saidov, said Friday that the town was again in government's hand after the Defence and Interior Ministry forces of the neo-Communist regime launched an offensive Monday.

He said some isolated exchanges of fire were continuing in the town, but that most of the rebel forces had been driven from Tavil-Dara.

The Tajik opposition, which has launched regular attacks from bases in neighbouring Afghanistan ever since it was chased from power in 1992, took Tavil-Dara on May 12 in an attack which drew condemnation from the U.N. Security Council.

More than 60 government troops were killed in that offensive, and since then

fierce clashes have sporadically flared in the region.

Tajikistan, one of the poorest of the former Soviet republics, has been torn apart by war since neo-Communist leader Emomali Rakhmonov seized power in December 1992, toppling a coalition of Islamic and democratic forces.

A ceasefire agreement concluded in Tehran in 1994 has been violated on numerous occasions.

Talks between the Dushanbe regime and opposition representatives are due to resume Monday in the Turkmen capital Ashkhabad.

Mr. Turjanzadeh said despite the fighting his movement was "committed to peace" and would take part in the talks.

N. Zealand's Ruapehu grumbles to life again

WELLINGTON (R) — Mount Ruapehu in the centre of New Zealand's North Island grumbled back to life Saturday in a spectacular eruption of ash and steam, prompting a new danger warning for aircraft.

But skiers on one side of the mountain ignored the ash cloud that stained a brilliant sky as the Whakapapa Ski Field opened for the winter season.

However, the Turoa Ski Field on the other side was closed as ash covered the snow.

And volcanologists refused to upgrade the warning status to level three on the five-point scale after dropping it back to level two Friday.

The Civil Aviation Authority extended its flight danger area around the mountain.

CAA spokesman Martyn Gosling said in a statement that the new area was a result of eruptions this morning which sent ash plumes to 30,000 feet (10,000 metres).

The new danger area covers an area east of the mountain over most of the North Island, to the northern part of the South Island.

Some provincial airports were closed.

The last moderate-sized ash eruption was on June 27.

Dr. Ian Nairn, a volcanologist with the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science, said the mountain's behaviour this morning was consistent with the level two alert.

"The activity is similar to that earlier in the week. The difference is that with the better weather people can see it."

The mountain, which erupted spectacularly in September last year, had been quiet until last month when it returned to life, covering large swathes of the North Island with ash.

Charles, Diana set to agree on divorce

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles and Princess Diana look set to agree an end to their 15-year marriage as early as next week.

After 10 weeks of bitter wrangling, Prince Charles is believed to have made a "clean break" offer of up to £20 million (\$30 million) to the glamorous princess he married in a fairytale wedding that turned sour.

Sources close to the estranged couple say they could reach agreement and make a joint statement Monday, ending one of the sorriest chapters in the history of the House of Windsor.

Princess Diana's lawyer Anthony Julius discussed Prince Charles' offer with her Friday and the ball is now in Princess Diana's court. If she accepts, the marriage could be annulled within two months.

"Proper consideration will be given to the proposals that have been made," Mr. Julius told reporters.

Both sides refused to comment on the details but Prince Charles was said to have preferred making a "drip feed" annual

allowance offer. Princess Diana stuck to her demand for a lump sum.

If Prince Charles offers a multimillion pound settlement, then he will either need help from his mother, Queen Elizabeth, or a loan from the bankers of his Duchy of Cornwall.

Mutual mistrust abounded in the divorce negotiations, denting the popularity of the monarchy. The queen had urged the couple to agree to a speedy end to their failed marriage.

Prime Minister John Major, echoing the views of many Britons, said: "I think everyone will be happy when this matter is satisfactorily concluded."

Princess Diana, who will spend the weekend mulling Prince Charles' offer, is expected to keep her Kensington Palace home in London and be given an allowance to run her own private office.

One sticking point could be her title — Princess Diana is said to be keen still to be called Her Royal Highness while the queen is apparently reluctant to agree.

Princess Diana has been separated from the 47-year-old heir to the throne for more than two years. Under English law, the couple can divorce on the grounds of this two-year separation.

Princess Diana and Prince Charles would continue to share equal access to their sons, Prince William and Prince Harry. However bitter the break, she will always remain an important member of the royal family because she is the mother of the future King William.

Princess Diana, 35, has said she wants to be an unofficial ambassador for Britain and what she termed a "queen of people's hearts."

Divorce would not affect Prince Charles' right to be king but he would be the first royal for 280 years to take the throne as a divorced man. He has said he has no intention of marrying his mistress, the divorcee Camilla Parker Bowles.

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

An Israeli breach in the peace treaty

ONE OF the most important achievements of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, concluded in Wadi Araba on Oct. 10, 1994, is the assumed restoration of Jordan's fair share of water, at a time when the water needs of the country far exceed what is annually available.

In this respect, one of the gains that Jordan realised was 50 million cubic metres of water from additional sources, to be identified and agreed upon within one year from the date the treaty entered into effect.

According to the treaty, Jordan has the full right to receive an annual amount of 50 mcm of additional water, starting Oct. 26, 1995, at which time Israel should have determined its source. However, nothing has been done so far and the question of whether the Israeli side would honour or ignore this commitment remains open and triggers another question about Jordan's possible response to this serious breach in the treaty, only one year after its conclusion.

To document the above state of affairs, it is useful to consult the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty's Annex No. 2 titled "Water Related Matters", and in particular the annex's first article, "Allocations", under which there is a paragraph labelled "Additional Water" from where I quote:

"Jordan and Israel shall cooperate in finding sources for the supply to Jordan of an additional quantity of 50 million cubic metres a year of water of drinkable standards. To this end, the joint Water Committee will develop, within one year from the entry into force of the Treaty, a plan for the supply to Jordan of the above mentioned

additional water. This plan will be forwarded to the respective governments for discussion and decision."

What we have now is a clear breach of contract by the Israeli side. This breach started eight months ago and continued throughout the tenure of the Labour government led by Shimon Peres.

It still goes on, under the Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu who, in all fairness, hasn't had yet the time to right the wrong and remove the discrepancy, if that is his intention.

When the Jordan-Israel peace treaty was signed, in late 1994, some opposed to the treaty claimed that Jordan did not recover all its fair share of water from Yarmouk and Jordan rivers. On the other hand, there were official assurances that Jordan did in fact recover all its water rights which Israel previously seized. The problem that arises now is that even if Jordan got a verbal Israeli recognition of its water rights, the Israeli side failed so far to honour its commitments, which is a serious situation that cannot be met with silence.

Giving up one drop of Jordanian water is equivalent to giving up Jordanian soil. Both are categorically unacceptable. The treaty between Jordan and Israel is not merely a non-binding draft or a letter of intent. It is an international final and precise contract, which must be respected and carried out to the letter. There is no place for compromise.

An Arabic version of this article, to be published in Al Ra'i newspaper, will serve as a notice to our Jordanian people that there is a serious breach in the peace treaty and that Jordan's water rights are in jeopardy.

A good day in Russia

By Gwynne Dyer

THEY DID not postpone or cancel the election, they did not rig it, and in the end the Russians showed remarkable maturity for novice democrats. They held their noses and voted for Boris Yeltsin rather than let the Communists back in. In terms of enabling the world to make it into the next century without losing all the past decade's gains for peace and justice, Russia's voters have more than made up for last month's failure of nerve by Israeli voters.

We have been spared an embittered, xenophobic, anti-Semitic regime for unreconstructed Communists. They were so inept and out of touch with reality that their rule would have collapsed in a few years, but they would probably have left Russia in bloody chaos.

"It is an open secret that the imperialist circles are eagerly awaiting the time when they will be dealing with a Russia that has been torn apart and bled dry," Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov told a party conference last January. His spin doctors tried to make him look modern and moderate, but he was the genuine article: an unreformed Stalinist who combined economic illiteracy with the worst kind of great Russian ultra-nationalism.

What we all get instead, of course, is the tottering, perhaps dying figure of President Boris Yeltsin. But he was definitely the lesser of two evils, and the election campaign had a very positive effect on his policies. In order to round up the necessary votes, he had to take steps and accept allies that he previously shunned.

In March, Mr. Yeltsin finally signed a decree

allowing Russians to buy and sell land, a measure far more important for the average Russian than the privatisation of industry. In April, he began a pull-out of Russian troops from Chechnya, where 40,000 people have been killed by his needless war — and his new partner, ex-General Alexander Lebed, will hold him to it. "I am the man who can stop the war," Mr. Lebed said last September, and he probably can.

That bloodless massacre was necessary in order to add the 15 per cent of votes won by Mr. Lebed in the first round to Yeltsin's own 35 per cent. That was the vital margin that gave Mr. Yeltsin victory in the second round. But it also gave him Alexander Lebed as a de facto deputy president, and as potential successor if Mr. Yeltsin does not live out his present term (which he may not). So now we get to fret about Mr. Lebed's democratic credentials instead.

"It is not the generals who are running for election that you have to worry about, it is the ones who are not," Mr. Lebed is wont to rumble in his impossibly bass voice, and it seems a fair comment.

Mr. Yeltsin is 65. Mr. Lebed is only 46, but the point about Russia is that nobody in a position of power — indeed, nobody over 30 — spent his formative years in a democratic environment. They are all learning as they go along, and few of them have mastered the art of political correctness. But it does not make them all potential dictators.

Mr. Lebed does not admire Mr. Yeltsin. When he quit drinking a few years ago, he remarked: "There should be at least one man in Russia who is sober." But he is a sensible patriot, not a rabid one, and he certainly understands that the present painful economic changes must continue. "Without a market and private property, people work much worse," he recently told the newspaper Trud.

And the worst is probably past, in terms of economic pain. "The only thing we

have achieved in these five years is that these elections took place," Mr. Lebed said on Russia television last month, but in fact Mr. Yeltsin's new government inherits a rapidly improving situation. The runaway inflation is past, the ruble has more or less stabilised, and Russia has built up a strong trade surplus.

National output has almost halved since 1990, but much of the lost production was in the old military-industrial complex. This year the economy may finally start to grow again — and over 80 per cent of industrial workers now work in private enterprises.

This is still a country with twice Germany's population, and its citizens are just as well-educated. It has immense resources.

Much of its production was wasted by the old Communist system, but Russia is still potentially a great country and a great power. Given stability at the centre, the next five years are likely to see it reemerge on the world stage, and to start providing its own citizens with a decent living.

"Given stability at the centre" — but can Russia now count on that? Probably yes. Because Mr. Yeltsin has had to take aboard powerful allies who will curb the worst of his excesses, crack down on the corruption and enforce a more predictable economic policy.

And if Mr. Yeltsin dies? Then there would have to be a new presidential election. But Mr. Lebed is now the heir apparent, and in a couple of years' time he could easily win against a Communist opposition whose demographic base, strongly tilted towards the elderly, is literally dying off. Russia is a much better bet than it looks.

Troubled Kosovo haunts Serbian president

By Dan de Luce
Reuter

BELGRADE — What once provided the means of attaining power has turned into a never-ending headache for Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

The trouble lies in the southern province of Kosovo where Belgrade uses heavily-armed police to protect a tiny Serbian minority, outnumbered nine to one by ethnic Albanians.

Mr. Milosevic rose to power by championing the cause of the Kosovo Serbs, setting off a chain of events that helped lead to the bloody disintegration of former Yugoslavia.

After four years of war in Bosnia and Croatia, Mr. Milosevic has no longer any use for warmongering nationalists whom he has systematically purged from

his ruling party and government.

Faced with a ruined economy, he would now prefer to sweep Kosovo off the political map. But ethnic Albanian activists, western governments and disgruntled Serb nationalists refuse to let the issue go.

Regular violence has erupted in Kosovo over the past two months, with Serbian police being attacked and killed in a spate of incidents.

The West recognises Kosovo belongs to Serbia, but insists Mr. Milosevic must improve Albanian human rights before allowing Belgrade's full return to international respectability.

Kosovo was thrust back into the spotlight when Serbian Professor Aleksandar Despic made a speech discussing the possibility of Kosovo's secession from Serbia.

Mr. Despic is the head of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the same body blamed for setting the Serb nationalist agenda adopted by Mr. Milosevic 10 years ago.

Most political analysts believe ousted nationalists were behind Mr. Despic.

"They want to make life more complicated for the regime, because it has plenty of other things to worry about now," said historian and opposition writer Ljiljana Perovic.

Pointing to demographic trends which show the Albanian population increasing steadily, Mr. Despic said time was running out for Serbia to resolve the problem.

He set out two options — Kosovo staying in Serbia with Albanians enjoying equal civil rights, or a secession in which borders would be agreed peacefully.

The speech was unusual for its frank discussion of unfavourable population trends, something the government refuses to admit publicly.

It touched a raw nerve among Serb activists in Kosovo, who have been demanding Mr. Milosevic visit them to answer their fears that they may be sold out.

Ideas about dividing Kosovo and retaining about a third for Serbs are nothing new, but Yugoslav Interior Minister Vukasin Jokanovic called Mr. Despic's remarks "totally unacceptable".

Whatever the outcome of the debate, few expect the suffocating atmosphere between the effectively segregated communities to change for the better.

Since Mr. Milosevic stripped them of autonomy in 1989, the Albanians have run a parallel administration which provides the community with its educa-

tion and health care. They have their own parliament and their own president.

Belgrade's anxiety is reflected in the nervous faces of the outnumbered Serbian policemen patrolling the teeming Albanian villages.

Cheap housing and other incentives have failed to stem an exodus of Kosovo Serbs who see no future there.

Ethnic Albanians welcomed Mr. Despic's pragmatic tone but strongly opposed drawing new boundaries.

"We will not accept any division of Kosovo. That would mean war," said one Albanian official.

With the international community preoccupied with enforcing a peace accord in Bosnia, ethnic Albanians fear their cause is being ignored.

Increasingly frustrated, they have dropped calls for autonomy and advocate independence, a demand western powers are reluctant to support.

European Union recognition of Belgrade, a reward for backing the Dayton peace accord, was a bitter disappointment for the Albanians.

Their leaders are pinning their hopes on the United States though Washington has never endorsed independence and has taken to stressing the inviolability of legal borders.

As the deadlock drags on, Kosovo Albanians will turn increasingly radical as they lose patience with a strategy of peaceful resistance, said Veton Surroi, editor of the independent Albanian weekly Koha.

Unlike the current Albanian leadership, who were raised with Serbs in old Yugoslavia, a new generation is growing up completely apart from their Serb neighbours.

Western powers have long feared a wider conflict could erupt in the southern Balkans if Albanian discontent boils over in Kosovo or neighbouring Macedonia.

No turning back in the Middle East

Following is the editorial of June 25, 1996, issue of the Economist.

AMERICA'S hand in the Middle East has, more often than not, been helpful to those who live there. People speak, or at least spoke, of a pax Americana: the United States threw Iraq out of Kuwait; stayed on to protect the Gulf states from Iraqi and Iranian trouble-making; guided Israel and the Arab states into, or towards, peace. But now, in Saudi Arabia, the kindly hand has been savagely bitten.

The huge bomb that on June 25th blew up part of the King Abdul Aziz air base in Dhahran on the east coast of Saudi Arabia was aimed at Americans and hit its target squarely: 19 American servicemen were killed and over 300 people (mainly Saudis, Bangladeshis and Americans) wounded. The suspected terrorists are thought to be radical Islamists, many of them Saudis who fought the Russians in Afghanistan and are now engaged in a subterranean battle against their own rulers. Americans are a target because of the support they give the ruling family, because they are missionaries for a way of life and thought that fundamentalists reject but which many non-Islamists crave, and because killing Americans gets vast publicity.

Five American servicemen were killed last November by a car-bomb in Riyadh. But the scale of the last attack is reminiscent of the bomb that killed 241 American marines and sailors in Beirut in 1983. After that outrage, the marines were withdrawn, their mission (to save lives) considered by many Americans a quixotic mistake. Will similar conclusions be drawn about keeping troops in an ungrateful Saudi Arabia?

It would be wrong if they were: the American presence is largely self-interested. Some 3,000 servicemen are in Dhahran, mostly American but also British and French, their presence a hangover from the Gulf war. Their job is to police the no-fly zone in southern Iraq where, though they cannot save Iraq's Shiites from Saddam Hussein's cruelty, they discourage large-scale brutality. But beyond this they have a large protective role. Arab Gulf regimes, which before Iraq invaded Kuwait shuddered away from a visible American military presence, are now glad to shelter behind it.

The internal stability to Saudi Arabia, home to all that oil and investment, is vital to American and other Western interests. How to keep the place stable? Not by keeping soldiers there: They can do only so much, protecting the kingdom and its satellites from external dangers, not internal ones. Almost certainly, the dan-

gers from inside — both in Saudi Arabia and in offshore tiny Bahrain, the administrative headquarters of America's Fifth Fleet — are the more threatening.

Outsiders have to be prepared for changes of regime, however inconvenient — and there is no doubting the inconvenience of an anti-western revolution in the Gulf. But reform, rather than revolution, remains possible. America's continuing task, after last week's horrors have been absorbed, is to help the Gulf's autocratic rulers to widen their rule, allowing their people a stronger voice and greater freedoms. Political and human-rights reform would go a long way to satisfy the democratic opposition, including moderate Islamists. Nothing will satisfy the extremists. But such measures would isolate the men of violence, distinguishing them from people who want change and liberty

Europe's neutrals start to bite the bullet

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — When the cold war ended and the Soviet Union collapsed, a small group of wealthy states began to worry about their place in a fast-changing new world.

Five years on, Europe's neutral nations are slowly emerging from their identity crisis.

As NATO and the European Union prepare to expand into Central and Eastern Europe, debate is stirring in Finland, Austria, Sweden and Ireland over how far they should become involved in Western security structures.

"These countries have realised that a new Europe is upon them and that neutrality has no meaning any longer, since the world is not shaped by two opposing military blocs," said Alexander Rahr of the German Foreign Policy Association in Bonn.

Diplomats say several powerful factors have come together at the same time to provoke the debate now.

The most important is the prospect of NATO and EU enlargement. The 16-nation alliance is widely expected to decide next year that Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic can join.

Those countries, and others, are also expected to join the 15-nation EU some time around the year 2000.

While no neutral state is planning to join NATO, they can all see that European security is changing fast and some fear being left on the margins if they do not get more involved.

Moreover, the EU is currently engaged in a major review of how it works, including efforts to put together a common foreign and security policy which may produce a real defence policy.

Since most EU members

are also in NATO, this means that Finland, Austria and Sweden — which joined the European Union last year — are already drawn into discussions on Western security issues.

There is a growing convergence between the U.S.-led Western alliance and the European club, with the possibility that the EU may develop a real defence arm in the coming years. In that context, diplomats say, neutrality looks all but impossible.

Another factor is that it has become very clear recently that NATO is, for now, the key player in European security.

The alliance is leading the 60,000-strong peace force in Bosnia, an operation which includes many countries outside NATO.

But the traditional role of Western forces is changing fast. There is less reliance on military might and more emphasis on peacekeeping

and humanitarian missions. NATO is also creating a bigger role for European allies.

All of these changes are attractive to many neutral states, some of which have a long and proud tradition in global U.N. peacekeeping and a suspicion of U.S. muscle-flexing.

"The way NATO is changing means that Western military structures have become more respectable, more acceptable to the neutrals," said Paul Cornish of Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) in London. "They are moving towards us but we are also moving towards them."

This was illustrated last December when Switzerland, which has no intention of abandoning its fierce neutrality, agreed to grant passage to NATO troops and material bound for peacekeeping duty in Bosnia — saying it wanted

to help peace efforts.

The liveliest debate on neutrality recently has been in Finland, which learned to live with its giant Soviet neighbour during the cold war.

Finland has joined NATO's partnership for peace military cooperation scheme and is involved in Bosnia but has said it has no intention of seeking membership of the alliance.

Nevertheless, with great uncertainty about Russia's future, Finland is nervous about security around its borders and particularly with regard to the Baltic republics. The government opens special talks with NATO this week on Finnish concerns.

Some commentators and politicians even suggested recently that Finland might have to consider joining NATO if the alliance expands eastwards — an idea that would have been considered both extraordi-

nary and taboo just a few years ago.

"Remaining outside NATO would mean exclusion from European decision-making on security policy," Finnish foreign policy expert Max Jakobson said earlier this month.

The issue remains highly sensitive and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari has stepped into the debate to stress that his country would maintain its traditional non-alignment.

With neighbouring Sweden, Finland has drawn up a joint approach to European security — saying that all members must be involved if the EU is to develop a real voice in defence. Again, diplomats say, the approach is driven partly by fear that these countries will be left on the sidelines.

For Ireland, the problem may soon become acute. Dublin takes over the rotating EU presidency — and will hold it until the end

of the year, when the NATO-led peace force is due to withdraw from Bosnia.

"It will be difficult for the Irish, because they will need to speak on this issue and help with coordination," said one European diplomat, who asked not to be identified.

The Irish government showed signs of change in March when it said it would consider joining NATO's partnership for peace.

Dublin has also said it could cooperate more closely with the Western European Union (WEU), an EU-related defence group.

Both of these views caused controversy in Ireland and the same is true in Austria.

The conservative wing of the coalition government says cooperation with NATO should be considered, while the socialists insist that Austria must do nothing which would com-

promise non-alignment. Public debate on the issue is growing livelier.

In many cases, the decision to go for neutrality is based on historical wounds that are still raw.

Finland remembers the bitter war against the Soviet Union that ended with humiliating defeat in 1944.

Austria was forced into neutrality following World War II. Irish neutrality is linked to its bloody and tangled history with Britain.

But there are signs that these countries are moving towards change, forced on them now by changes in the world around them.

"The neutrals know that it is time for them to make some decisions," said Mr. Rahr. "It is crucial for them to make sure that the European house now under construction has enough space to accommodate their concerns. They must engage in the debate."

Andean pilgrimage blends pagan, Christian rites

By Mariana Bazo
Reuters

MOUNT AUSANGATE, Peru — Peruvian mule trainer Jose Jaime had his previous prayers to the God of Mount Ausangate answered, so he was a bit bolder this time.

"I asked the God for a plot of land and then for some sheep, and he gave me both. Now I'm going to ask for a van," said Mr. Jaime during a recent pilgrimage to this sacred mountain in the Peruvian Andes.

Mr. Jaime's voice was barely discernible above the drums, flutes and singing of the myriad music groups among the 70,000 believers who flocked to Mount Ausangate for a six-day ceremony last month.

Meanwhile, an Indian woman intoned at the entrance to the Colluruti shrine at the foot of Ausangate, 5,000 metres above sea-level.

"Thirty thousand dollars for one sol, \$30,000 for one sol," she repeated, offering mock U.S. money for the price of one Peruvian sol (41 cents).

Believers then used the money to "buy" stones on the mountain representing the houses, cars, credit cards and other consumer goods they aspire to.

The God (or "Apu") in the Quechuan language spoken by Peru's Inca and other Andean peoples of the Ausangate Mountain was worshipped in Peru long before the 16th century

Spanish conquest and the subsequent arrival of Christianity.

But the Colluruti shrine is an entirely Catholic icon.

Peru's best-known annual pilgrimage is an extraordinary blend of native Indian and traditional Catholic rites and beliefs — with a strong dose of modern-day materialism.

"This festival is an Andean-Christian mix," said Miguel Martinez, an anthropologist from Cuzco, the former capital of Peru's pre-conquest Inca empire.

"The Ausangate is the most important God in southern Peru," said Jesuit Priest Carlos Flores of the mountain, which is an eight-hour drive from Cuzco and soars to 6,384 metres above sea-level.

"On the other hand, the Colluruti shrine is a sacred, religious place with very ancient roots which have been 'Christianised'."

The 'Christianisation' of indigenous Peru began with the early 16th century arrival of the Spanish conquistadores.

Through a combination of bravery, luck, skill and trickery, a small band of Spanish soldiers managed to subdue the mighty Inca empire which had in the 13th century achieved ascendancy over the multitude of tribes living in the region.

Modern-day Peru still mirrors this joint heritage in many aspects of society — and nowhere is this clearer than on Ausangate where the Indian and Christian tra-



A villager dressed as an ancient Inca policeman performs the ritual of carrying a block of ice from the snow-capped Ausangate Mountain peak in the Andean highlands of Cuzco during a six-day pilgrimage when hundreds of villagers carry out the ancient Inca purification ritual (Reuters photo)

ditions have blended into one.

"I support them and I allow them to carry on with

their beliefs," said Father Flores, who has held masses at the Colluruti shrine for the last six years. "Why

should the Catholic church be open to many cultures but not to the culture which has our roots?"

Around the Colluruti shrine, tens of thousands of pilgrims camped for six days, taking part in a festi-

val of dance, song and religious rites. The most striking figures in the pilgrimage on Ausan-

gate were the 300 young men chosen from local communities for their superior strength to represent the "Inca policemen."

These youths climbed the mountain, endured a night in the open in freezing temperatures as part of a ritual test of strength, and then heaved huge blocks of ice down on their backs in the manner of Christ carrying the cross.

The ice symbolised both an expiation of sins in the Christian tradition and a renewal of life in the Indian tradition. "For the Andean people, this snow is the semen and the life. They are reproductive rites," said Father Flores. "In the Christian culture, water is also life."

"In bringing down the ice blocks, we are paying for sins. The ice washes away the sin," said one of the "policemen," Wilfredo Nina, 22.

The "policemen," who cover their faces with balaclavas and wear tunics representing animals, whipped the pilgrims throughout the festival, prohibiting the drinking of alcohol but allowing the chewing of coca-leaves to guard against mountain sickness.

"Our God, the mountain, is the lord of Colluruti. From our forefathers came all this custom and it is going to continue until death," said Mr. Nina.

Bosnian Muslims, Croats agree on joint army

(Continued from page 12)

NATO-led peacekeeping force (IFOR) in

Sarajevo. Lieutenant-Colonel Max Marriner, however publicly denied the Serbs had threatened the aircraft but confirmed that the

display of airpower was unprecedented in recent months.

Meanwhile, Germany called on Saturday for the arrest of Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic but the U.S. commander of NATO peacekeeping troops in Bosnia said he would neither detain nor intimidate him.

"I do not have orders to go and hunt down Dr. Karadzic. I don't have orders to lock him up in his house so he can't move about," Admiral Leighton Smith told reporters in Sarajevo.

Western government have tried to drive Karadzic from power as an indicted war criminal but have been reluctant to order their 50,000 peacekeeping troops in Bosnia to seize him.

They have tried unsuccessfully to persuade Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to extradite him to the U.N. war crimes tribunal in The Hague along with

Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic.

German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel said testimony given at the tribunal this week made clear that the two men should be put on trial for atrocities committed after Serbs overran the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica in 1995.

"International arrest warrants must be issued against Karadzic and Mladic after the evidence presented before the international war crimes tribunal," Mr. Kinkel said in a statement.

"They should not be able to feel safe anywhere in the world."

King Fahd greets visiting French president

(Continued from page 12)

the Saudi internal security forces that dates back to 1980.

Also expected during the visit were talks on how to keep alive the Middle East peace process, which has ground to a halt since the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took power in Israel last month.

Mr. Chirac insists that peace talks resume and has backed Arab demands that Israel respect accords reached under previous governments and

negotiate on a basis of returning occupied Arab land in exchange for peace with its neighbours.

Mr. Chirac took his ministers of defence, foreign affairs, interior and industries, but no contracts were due to be signed.

"The aim is above all political, not commercial," Mr. Colonna told reporters this week. Paris remembers vividly the humiliation of then Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, who went to Riyadh on an ill-prepared outing in January 1994 expecting to sign bumper con-

tracts, only to be snubbed and sent home empty-handed.

Officials said, however, that France still hoped to promote both military and commercial trade in future with Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest arms purchaser. France, which buys one-quarter of its oil from the kingdom, is Riyadh's third biggest arms supplier after the United States and Britain. Weapons sales average six billion francs (\$1.2 billion) a year, roughly equivalent to civilian exports.

VOUNI, Cyprus (R) — Jimmy, George, Poner and Porter make a mad dash for the food bins, keeping one watchful eye on strangers as they tuck into their last meal of the day.

Blossom smorts at a bin and knocks it over, hangs her head over the fence and purses her lips in what looks like a smirk.

"Some are healthy and some are a bit poorly," says Mary Skinner, a former marketing executive who has taken abandoned donkeys in Cyprus under her wing.

A total of 36 donkeys ranging from sprightly five-year-olds to "granddads" blind in one eye and pushing 40 live a life of luxury in large pens in the shade of carob trees on slopes above Vouni village in the wine-producing areas of Limassol district.

"The one thing they have in common is that they are all unwanted," Mary says, watching her husband Patrick, trying to cajole a stubborn donkey into a pen.

Once common but now rare apart from the occasional tourist attraction, donkeys were abandoned in droves in Cyprus with the economic boom of the last decade.

The Skimmers, from Kent, England, run the island's only donkey sanctuary.

"It is more than a full-time

Abandoned donkeys live life of luxury in Cyprus

job actually because we live here," Mary, 59, told Reuters.

The "Friends of the Cyprus Donkey" rely entirely on public contributions to operate, with yearly and life-long "donkey adoption" schemes available.

It costs five Cyprus pounds (\$10.55) to be a "friend" for a year, and 50 pounds to be a friend for life. Feed and care of a donkey costs 15 pounds a month.

In places like Vouni, a tiny village nestled on the steep southern slopes of the Troodos mountain range, one can still see donkeys chained to trees or left beside winding, narrow roads.

Donkeys, needing only a quarter of the daily nourishment of a horse, were seen as cheap transport in many Mediterranean countries. Now they have been replaced by more modern

transport.

Collecting donkeys dumped outside their door or left roaming in fields after grape harvests, the Skimmers have increased their 'pets' from six in October 1994 to 36 today.

"I wouldn't say most of the donkeys were mistreated, rather neglected," said Mary.

Soon they will be accommodating six more from Crete, where another donkey sanctuary is on the brink of closure.

The fate of the Cyprus donkey is entwined with that of many mountain villages. Once, every family had one. But their use gradually faded as more and more people moved to large towns like Nicosia and Limassol.

Two decades ago Vouni had 2,000 residents. Now there are 200. Dull-coloured stone and mud brick adjoining

homes are deserted, wooden shutters wide open to reveal dark, empty rooms.

"Only old people are left. The rest have gone," said Costas, the local taverna owner now earning a living from tourists.

The Skimmers offer some of their working donkeys for use during the harvest as an alternative to purchasing a cheap donkey which will later be abandoned.

In contrast to the forlorn beasts of burden tied to the sides of roads, the skimmers' herd are a noisy lot, even the few who are handicapped.

George is blind in one eye. Porter is recovering from a neck wound inflicted by somebody who threw petrol over him in May and tried to set him on fire. Policemen later found him abandoned in Limassol port.

The youngest donkey is five-year-old Phinias, named after the village of

Phini where he was found. Potter, pushing 40, is the oldest.

"He has barely got any teeth left. He sucks his food," Patrick chuckled.

"That's Primrose," Mary said, gesturing in the direction of an animal who let out a hearty snort before tucking into her crushed corn, barley and bran. Primrose was abandoned after the grape harvest last year.

"They are usually quite quiet but if another donkey comes to take that food away, it will just lash out at it, and if you walk behind a donkey while it's eating you might get it on the leg," said Mary.

Big Boy is one of the star attractions.

"Enormous, isn't he?," said Patrick with a touch of pride, patting Big Boy on the nose. "He is more like a cart horse."

Cypriot donkeys are known for their size, usually weighing up to 200 kilograms. Big Boy weighs almost twice that.

The Skimmers dismiss the idea of breeding donkeys. "These are all unwanted donkeys and people give us money to look after them," said Mary. "So I don't think it would be very responsible of us."

"Not yet anyway," said Patrick.

Qatari, Jordanian officials preparing for closer economic cooperation



Jordanian and Qatari officials during a working session Saturday (Petra Photo)

AMMAN (J.T.) — Qatari and Jordanian officials Saturday resumed their talks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade to prepare for the Jordanian-Qatari Higher Economic Committee meeting expected this week.

The core of the discussions between the two sides was the prospect of drawing up a comprehensive agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the two countries to be submitted for the signatures of the ministers of trade in the two countries at their forthcoming meeting in Amman.

Such an agreement will update a similar one that was signed in 1980, according to the Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary-General Mohammad Smadi who is leading the Jordanian side to the meetings.

He said that a new agreement was deemed necessary to cater to the new developments in trade and economic relations between Qatar and Jordan and in view of the political and economic changes in the Arab region.

The two sides had started their meetings Friday immediately upon the arrival in Amman of the Qatari delegation.

The Qatari delegation, led by Seif Bouainein who is the director of the Arab

Affairs Department at the Qatari Foreign Ministry, Saturday also visited the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce where they discussed prospects of cooperation between the private sectors in the two countries such as launching joint investment projects, holding trade fairs, exchanging visits by business communities and other events.

According to Haidar Murad, the federation's chairman, the two sides discussed also the creation of a Jordan-Qatar council to be entrusted with the task of coordinating economic and trade links between the two countries.

Federation sources said that the Jordanian-Qatari trade was not up to the aspired level, noting that Jordan's exports to Qatar

amounted to JD 8.5 million in 1992 and rose to JD 10 million in 1995. Qatar's exports to Jordan totalled JD 5 million in 1992 and increased to only JD 5.5 million last year.

The head of the Qatari delegation told Jordan Television that Qatar and Jordan have big potentials for trade exchanges adding that increasing the volume of trade exchanges can take

place through the organization of reciprocal trade fairs in Amman and Doha and through exchanges of visits by businessmen from the two countries.

The two sides concluded their meeting by deciding to create a coordination council to help pave the ground for highly advanced trade and economic links between the two countries.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JULY 7, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you get advice from an expert today, you can then handle your career activities in a more efficient and profitable manner. This evening will be good for you to be seen with those in authority who can be of great assistance.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Get your recreational activities so organized today that they are not too expensive, yet will provide you with maximum pleasure in your career activities. This evening will provide you with the information on some project.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't permit a quarrelsome person to enter your home today, and then you can make your abode run properly to the point that everyone who resides there will feel contentment and joy in living under your roof.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Forget dull chores today and plan how to have time at recreations you like today and which will be enjoyed by your loved ones. This evening you can meet with some experts can be of great assistance to you at this time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Join with your loved ones in whatever they like to do today, and forget going out with others for fun. This evening should be good for you to meet with those in authority who can be of great assistance to you at this time.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can ferret out information you need today, especially outside of your home, even if it is a bit difficult to do at this time. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your loved ones and have a good time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study those practical affairs you have in mind today so that you can handle them well during the week ahead. Later this evening you can meet with some bigwig and discuss your career activities for being successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your judgement today is good and you can gain the cooperation of friends for a plan which interests you at this time. This evening you can consult with some bigwig for the opportunity to gain the success you desire.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can discuss matters concerning your progress with a bigwig privately today and determine his or her advice in proceeding concerning some important new project which need some immediate attention in the days ahead.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Going on a little trip with a good friend is just what the doctor ordered today and avoid something you can do little about. Later tonight you can meet with fellow associates and construct some new course of action.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study just where you are headed in material matters today and then hit on the correct outlet for gaining your progress in the days ahead. This evening you should be able to meet with some knowledgeable person who is available.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Change your attitude toward a difficult association today and come to a better understanding at this time. Show you are open-minded in your attitude towards your success and completion of some new project.

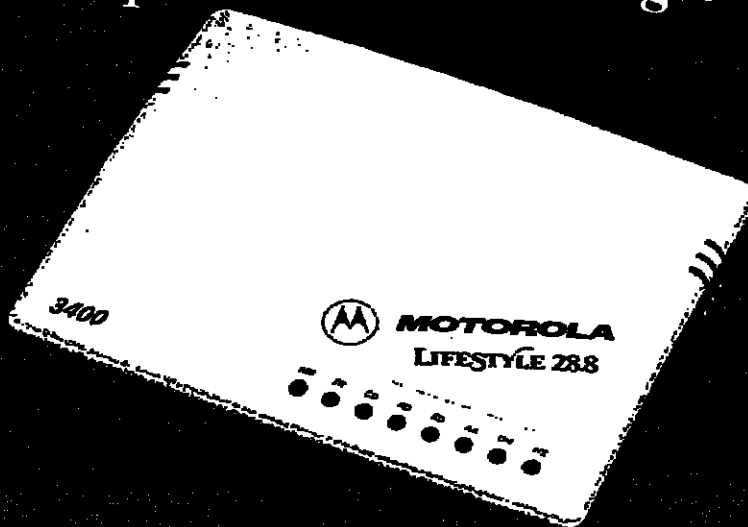
Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye



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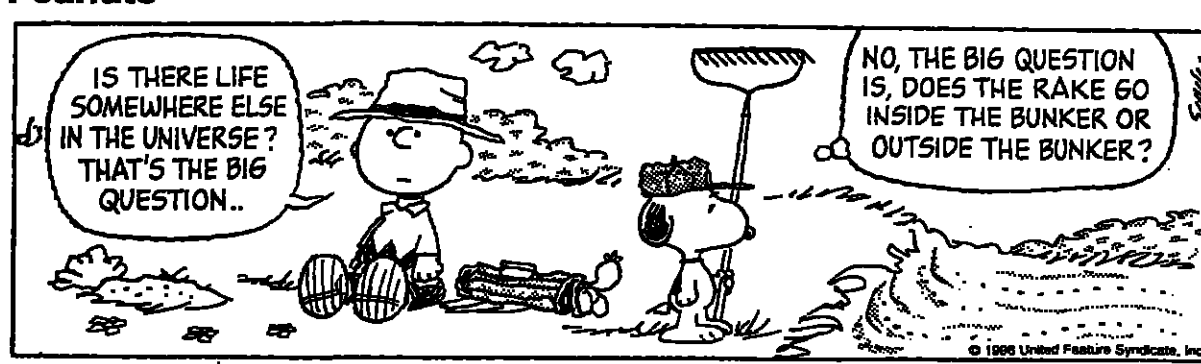
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Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

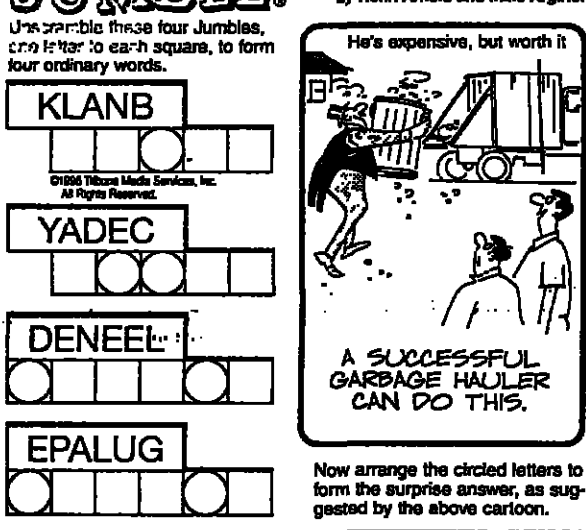
By Glasbergen



"Actually, I have strong feelings for all the men in my office. I want to punch Bob, I want to choke Tom..."

JUMBLE

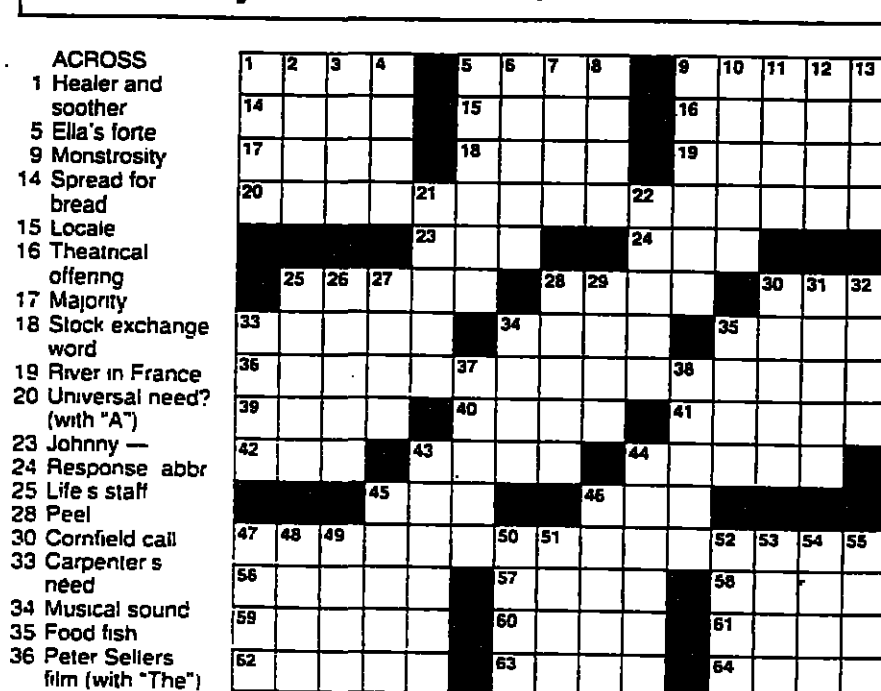
THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Herl Arnold and Mike Argilison



Print answer here: (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHYLY NOISE TETHER MUSLIN Answer: Why he received a medal — FOR HIS METTLE

THE Daily Crossword by Frank R. Jackson



- ACROSS
- 1 Healer and soother
 - 5 Ella's forte
 - 9 Monstrosity
 - 14 Spread for bread
 - 15 Locale
 - 16 Theatrical offering
 - 17 Majority
 - 18 Stock exchange word
 - 19 River in France
 - 20 Universal need? (with "A")
 - 23 Johnny —
 - 24 Response abbr
 - 25 Life's staff
 - 28 Peel
 - 30 Cornfield call
 - 33 Carpenter's need
 - 34 Musical sound
 - 35 Food fish
 - 36 Peter Sellers' film (with "The")
 - 39 Feed the kitty
 - 40 Decorate again
 - 41 Dress shape
 - 42 Once named
 - 43 Edges
 - 44 Trapshooting
 - 45 Pouch
 - 46 Australian bird
 - 47 Noiseless
 - 56 Was capable
 - 57 Former country monogram
 - 58 Hauling wagon
 - 59 M. Zola
 - 60 Cop's milieu
 - 61 Eye coquettishly
 - 62 Greek demigod
 - 63 States
 - 64 Oboe, for one
- DOWN
- 1 Explosive device
 - 2 Wings
 - 3 "— we forget"
 - 4 Just about all
 - 5 Venerable
 - 6 Tiny bit
 - 7 Flying prefix
 - 8 Forbidden
 - 9 Chum
 - 10 Reclines at ease
 - 11 Always
 - 12 Atmosphere
 - 13 Retain
 - 21 Remove
 - 22 More sensible
 - 25 Daniel or Pat
 - 26 Way to go
 - 27 Other
 - 28 Established pathways
 - 29 Division word
 - 30 Name in radium
 - 31 In respect to, old style
 - 32 Walk through water
 - 33 Govt agent
 - 34 Pronoun
 - 35 Fictitious account
 - 37 Instant
 - 38 Caulking stuff
 - 43 Certain football player
 - 44 Hurts
 - 45 Besmirch
 - 46 Output of Ella
 - 47 Experts
 - 48 Body
 - 49 Resign
 - 50 Bucketlike vessels
 - 51 Sailing along
 - 52 Small
 - 53 Suggest strongly
 - 54 Fire or yard end
 - 55 Looked over

Business U.S. a

WASHINGTON (R) — A controversial \$5.4 billion merger of the Union Pacific Corp. and Southern Pacific Corp. has been approved by a U.S. regulatory agency, creating the largest railroad in the western hemisphere.

The unanimous approval by the three-member Surface Transportation Board marks a new era in one of the nation's most basic and ancient industries, and combines more than 31,000 miles of rail track from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

This is truly a historic event, said Steven Cohen, senior partner of North Carolina law firm Capital Arbitration. "These two have been in a merger for years trying to merge."

The ruling came with 35 conditions, including eliminating trackage rights in the giant Burlington Northern (B.N.) Santa Fe railroad and granting trackage rights to other small railroads in the merger area.

The board did not require a track divestiture, a move that Union Pacific officials had said they strongly opposed and warned would trigger a merger.

The deal — which the railroads will yield tremendous public benefits — has been one of the most controversial rail mergers in history.

Officials have warned that it could lead to wage cuts and job losses.

Christian, who heads both Air France and the mainly Asian Air France fleet, said a merger was needed to prepare the group for liberalization of the European airline market.

He said he planned to merge the two companies in 1997, creating a structure similar to that of rivals such as Air Canada or Delta, and to bring the Air France fleet, among the highest in the world, in line with the fleet of parent Air France, which are lower.

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Sports

Barcelona pull out of Koepke transfer deal

STUTTGART (R) — Germany goalkeeper Andreas Koepke was left without a club when Barcelona pulled out of a transfer deal on Friday, less than a week after helping his country win the European Championship.

Barcelona, in a surprise announcement, said they had signed Portuguese goalkeeper Vitor Baia from Porto late Thursday night.

The news came two weeks after Koepke's agent Karl Ortel claimed the 34-year-old goalkeeper and the Spanish club had agreed terms for a two-year contract.

But Ortel said that Koepke would not sign for VFB Stuttgart, the club he turned down when he believed he was going to Spain. Koepke, seeking to leave relegated Eintracht Frankfurt, had in talks with VFB Stuttgart before receiving an offer from Barcelona during the European Championship in England.

He denied Stuttgart's claim that he had agreed terms with them but, just as the German Soccer Federation (DFB) announced on Friday that Koepke would be free to go to Barcelona,

the Spanish club said they had signed Baia instead. VFB Stuttgart President Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder said he still wanted Koepke but Ortel said it was "1,000 per cent out of the question that Andreas Koepke will ever play for VFB Stuttgart in his career". He said Koepke, who passed a fitness test in Barcelona on Wednesday, had already received offers from several other clubs. Koepke was left in a similar situation to Brazil's Taffarel, who was unemployed for six months after helping his country win the 1994 World Cup.

Taffarel kept fit by playing centre-forward for an Italian club team as he could not find a club and now plays for Belo Horizonte side Atletico Mineiro. The German agency said reported that Barcelona had been frightened off by buying Koepke by the threat of a legal tussle with VFB Stuttgart and had made use of a clause allowing it to pull out of the deal to sign him before July 5.

"We couldn't wait any longer, the situation in Germany was unclear," said quoted Barcelona vice-president Juan Gaspart saying.

Chelsea sign Di Matteo for \$7 million

LONDON (R) — English Premier League Chelsea completed the signing of Italy midfielder Roberto Di Matteo from Lazio for a club record 4.9 million pounds Sterling (\$7.62 million) Friday.

Di Matteo, 26, joins compatriot Gianluca Vialli and French defender Franck Leboeuf at the London club, who finished in mid-table last season.

"The Premier League will have caught up (with Italy's Serie A) in two or three years' time. It is very strong, both competitively and physically. That is why so many top players want to come to England," he said.

Di Matteo, who turned down offers from Italy's Internazionale and Germany's Borussia Dortmund, added: "The most important factor in choosing Chelsea was that (Dutch player-coach) Ruud Gullit wanted me here at all costs."



Netherlands' Michael Boogerd holds up his arms as he wins the 6th stage of the 83rd Tour de France between Arc-et-Senans and Aix Les Bains (207km). Stephan Henlot of France retains the leader's yellow jersey (Reuters photo)

Tour de France

Awful conditions force 17 riders to quit

AIX-LES-BAINS, France (R) — Bad weather took its toll as 17 riders left the Tour de France on another awful day Friday.

Fourteen, including former world champion Lance Armstrong of the United States, pulled out during the day's 207-km sixth stage from Arc-et-Senans, made particularly tough by heavy downpours and violent winds.

Three others were eliminated for finishing outside the time limit.

"I think I have bronchitis," said Armstrong, who has won two Tour stages, one in 1993 and one last year. "I'm feeling so poor that I would have had abandoned anyway."

With strenuous climbs in the Alps and the Pyrenees

still ahead, only 166 riders out of the 198 who started last Saturday from the Dutch city of Den Bosch are still going.

The weather predictions for the next few days are not good and Tour doctor Gerard Porte said he feared more would give up.

"Not only there is a risk of seeing riders fall on slippery roads but with all the rain we've had, some face medical problems, especially chest infections and tendinitis," he said.

"Most of the favourites are doing all right because they are top athletes but some of the other guys are really tired," he added.

The bad weather which has prevailed in the last few days has affected the speed of the riders, who have

often finished the stages far behind schedule.

"It's very difficult for the riders because as they finish ever so late, they have little time to recover for the next day," said Festina team director Bruno Roussel. "It's making them nervous."

In other circumstances race leader Stephane Henlot of France would have been delighted to keep the coveted yellow jersey but like everybody else he looked exhausted after Friday's rain-soaked ride in the Jura mountains.

"The conditions were atrocious," he said. "We're all fed up."

Olympics security on high alert after incidents

ATLANTA (R) — An Olympic Games security officer was shot in the chest by a stray bullet and two guards narrowly escaped injury when a stolen car ploughed through a security checkpoint, Games officials said Friday.

The two separate incidents, on the eve of the arrival of the first athletes, put Atlanta's elaborate Olympic security system on red alert just days after two mysterious packages prompted a bomb scare.

A spokesman for the Georgia State Olympic Law Enforcement Command (SOLEC) said Thomas Bendley, standing guard at an entrance to the Olympic village, received a minor gunshot wound while standing post overnight on Thursday.

"The investigation indicates that the incident was the result of a random shot fired into the air which caused the glancing wound," he said.

News reports said the bullet had been fired from an AK-47 semi-automatic rifle, a favourite with guerrilla groups, but police did not confirm this.

Police earlier thought the injury had been caused by fireworks let off during independence day celebrations.

In a separate incident, police said two men driving a stolen car crashed into a tent early on Friday at a checkpoint near the equestrian venue at Conyers, east of Atlanta.

Two guards escaped being hit by leaping

over a barbed-wire fence, a spokesman said.

One man in the car was arrested and a search was mounted for a second who fled the scene. The incident did not seem to be directly related to the equestrian venue, he said.

There was a major security alert on Monday after two suspicious packages were found near the Atlanta athletes' village during a ceremony in the complex attended by senior state, city and Olympic officials.

The scare turned out to be a false alarm, but anti-nuclear protesters said it highlighted the potential risk of attack on an ageing nuclear reactor in the middle of the village which becomes home from Saturday to athletes from 197 teams.

Security has been a top concern at the Olympics since 11 Israeli athletes were killed at the 1972 Games in Munich by members of the Black September group who captured them in the Olympic village.

The security setup in Atlanta will include 8,500 troops, mostly from the U.S. National Guard, and 2,500 federal agents from the FBI and other agencies, in addition to thousands of Georgia state and local police.

The July 19-August 4 Olympics will be the biggest Games ever with just more than 10,000 athletes taking part. Security accounts for \$69.8 million of the \$227 million the federal government is spending to support the Olympics.

Atlanta drug lab gets approval at last

ATLANTA (R) — A drug testing laboratory which will be the cornerstone of the fight against drug cheats at this month's Olympic Games received its official seal of approval on Friday.

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) said in a statement the long-awaited certification of its drugs lab had come through from the guardians of the Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The IOC's medical commission chairman, Prince Alexandre de Merode, said in a letter to ACOG the lab had passed its tests with flying colours, showing particularly impressive results from a machine called the high resolution

mass spectrometer (HRMS) which can trace illegal steroid use from months before.

"During the accreditation test on June 25 and 26, it was stressed that performance of the instruments devoted to high resolution mass spectrometry was remarkable," De Merode said.

The HRMS is one of the key elements in the IOC's fight against drug use and was a late addition to the Atlanta lab inventory. This is one of the reasons for lengthy delays in accreditation and Friday's eleventh-hour approval.

"We were never really concerned about this. We feel the laboratory is very well staffed and will do a great job. We are just

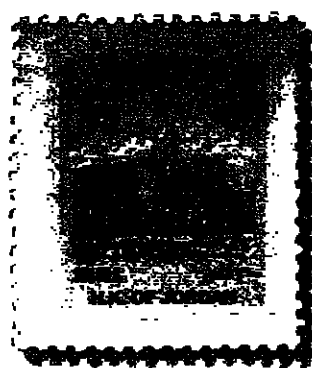
pleased to have this behind us so we can look ahead and do what we have to do during the Games," said ACOG's chief medical officer John Cantwell.

The laboratory will be staffed during the July 19 to August 4 Olympics by a team from pharmaceutical firm SmithKline Beecham, under the supervision of Barry Sample, and a team from the IOC-accredited lab in Los Angeles under the direction of Don Catlin, a veteran Olympic dope tester.

De Merode said the certification would be valid only for the Games and the Paralympic Games for disabled athletes between August 15 and 25.

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ANKARA (R) — Turkish opposition deputies on Saturday used a debate on the new government's programme to call for support in parliament to defeat the Islamist-led coalition at next week's confidence vote.

"We won't clear the way for the assembly to approve a government which appears to be tainted with corruption," said leftist Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal in a speech to parliament during the debate.

Mr. Baykal and other opposition deputies have said Turkey's first Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, and conservative leader Tansu Ciller formed a coalition to avoid investigations of alleged corruption against them.

Doubts as to whether their week-old alliance will survive Monday's confidence vote have overshadowed government plans presented by Mr. Erbakan, veteran leader of the Islam-backed Welfare Party.

The moderate plan set out by Mr. Erbakan comes after nine months of political chaos — during which general elections gave no party even a near-majority — which have generated a sense of urgency among Turkish businesses and workers seeking new policies to deal with the country's mounting economic and political woes.

"This government has got to pass the confidence vote," said the head of Turkey's Health Workers Union Mustafa Basoglu in a statement warning of the dangers of a continued power vacuum.

The government programme revealed during the week by Mr. Erbakan contained little of the radical, anti-Western measures advocated by him in the past.

The economic programme largely reflects the pro-market policies of coalition partner Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP), aiming to tame inflation, achieve steady growth, cut gaping deficits and speedup privatisation.

On foreign policy, Mr. Erbakan vowed to maintain NATO-member Turkey's close ties to the West while strengthening relations with Islamic, Central Asian and Balkan countries.

Mr. Erbakan said his government would consider changes to a law to boost Turkey's standing in a landmark customs union deal with the European Union, which went into effect in January.

The Islamists narrowly won general polls last December, securing 158 deputies in the 550-seat parliament, but were unable to find a coalition partner. A minority coalition between rival conservative parties collapsed last month.

Mr. Erbakan's coalition with Ms. Ciller's True Path Party — part of the short-lived coalition with Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland Party — appears to have overcome ideological differences but now must make sure it has enough deputies to pass the confidence vote.

The alliance between the Welfare Party and Ms. Ciller's DYP has 287 deputies on paper and needs votes from a majority of those attending the assembly vote in order to be approved.

Some Ms. Ciller deputies have threatened to vote against the alliance to protest the deal giving Islamists their biggest share of power in Turkey, a secular state with an overwhelmingly Muslim population.

By Mervat Suwadeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a further sign of escalating tension between the government and opposition parties, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Saturday harshly criticised the government's internal policies and threatened to seek a "non-confidence vote" in Parliament if "such policies" were not altered.

Deputy Hamzeh Mansur, spokesman for the IAF, accused the government of violating human rights and "cracking down" on Islamists under pressure from Israel and the U.S.

"Tens of Islamist activists were arrested during the past three months on charges of sympathising with the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)," Mr. Mansur charged. "All of the detainees that were released were severely tortured in violation of human rights which the government pledged to protect when it took office," he told a press conference.

"The government is going through a real crisis after it failed to live up to its commitments to safeguard democracy and carry out economic reform in the Kingdom," Mr. Mansur said.

Mr. Mansur demanded an "immediate release of all political prisoners" and urged the government to investigate on allegations of torture of detainees.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher rejected the IAF charges saying that the government "does not violate human rights and that the arrests that took place recently were for 'security reasons' and fell within the scope of the Jordanian law.

Flanked by six other Islamist deputies, Mr. Mansur said the IAF also disapproved of the government's economic policies that failed to improve "the deteriorating economic situation" in Jordan. He warned the government against hiking bread prices.

He said his party had earlier presented to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti two files on corruption cases which involved former ministers and officials, and the government "has not yet shown seriousness in fighting corruption."

"The prime minister promised to study the two files we presented but said he will not be able to deal with the cases that involve former ministers," said Deputy Bassam Umoush, who took part in preparing the two files.

Indicting ministers requires the approval of two thirds of the Lower House of Parliament's 80 deputies.

At Saturday's press conference, the IAF said it would fight government policies with all available means and in line with the law.

"If the government went on in implementing its current policies we will fight these policies with all possible means including statements, demonstrations and even seeking a non-confidence vote in Parliament," Mr. Mansur said.

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"If the government went on in implementing its current policies we will fight these policies with all possible means including state-aided demonstrations and even seeking a non-confidence vote in Parliament," Mr. Mansur said.

PARIS (R) — A Paris court has thrown out a lawsuit by Moroccan King Hassan accusing the daily newspaper *Le Monde* of offending him in a report on illicit drug trafficking in his country.

The court, in a verdict delivered on Friday, agreed that King Hassan had been insulted in a *Le Monde* article about a confidential report by a private drugs watchdog organisation.

But it concluded that the newspaper and journalist Erich Icinay were merely doing their job in accurately reporting the group's findings "without gratuitous attack, distortion or improper interpretation".

It is against French press law to offend a foreign head of state.

Le Monde printed extensive extracts from the court opinion in its Saturday editions.

The afternoon daily's article on November 3, 1995, had cited a report commissioned by the European Union from the Geopolitical Drugs Observatory (OGD), a private group based in Paris. It quoted the OGD report as saying up to 1,500 tonnes of hashish was exported every year from Morocco, making the kingdom the world's top source of the drug.

According to the article, the group concluded that King Hassan's 1992 pledge to fight drugs apparently went no further than public statements. Rabat called the report an attempt to harm Morocco at a sensitive stage of negotiations with the European Union on an asso-

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnian officials have agreed on the text of a defence bill on setting up a joint army for the Muslim-Croat federation that forms part of the postwar Bosnian republic, U.S. mediator James Pardew said Saturday.

Mr. Pardew said he had been officially notified that Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and the president of the Muslim-Croat federation, the Croat Kresimir Zubak had reached an agreement, which he described as "an act of vision and leadership" by the two men.

The agreement was initially announced on Bosnian television late Friday.

The creation of a joint army is a condition for the release of a multi-million-dollar defence aid package to the federation to enable it to act as counterweight to the more powerful Bosnian Serb forces in the Republika Srpska, the second entity in the republic.

The bill has to be approved by the federation parliament which will meet next week, Mr. Pardew told reporters here.

A joint defence ministry will also be formed with a unified chain of command, he said. Army recruits will however be able to choose the unit they serve in according to their religious affiliation.

"The two presidents will share civilian command over the armed forces until defence responsibilities are defined for each in a separate law to be passed within three months," Mr. Pardew said of the issue that had been the main stumbling block in the negotiations.

Once the bill has been passed into law, Washington will establish a training and equipment programme promised at the time of the signing of the Dayton peace accords last December.

The programme provides for \$140 million in military aid, with \$100 million to be provided by the United States. Mr. Pardew gave no details concerning the contributions of other countries.

In another development Saturday, Bosnian Serb forces threatened to shoot down U.S. helicopters after the aircraft spotted Serb heavy weapons in an exclusion zone prompting a major show of NATO muscle. Western military sources said here Saturday.

The threat was made on Friday in eastern Bosnia near to the Bosnian Serb army command at Han Pijesak, 60 kilometres northeast of Sarajevo, an area falling within the U.S. policed zone of the country.

The commander of the Serb unit in the area threatened to open condition of anonymity.

The Serb move prompted a major display of air power over the area, according to the same source, who added that U.S. attack helicopters have been sent to the area.

A spokesman for the

(Continued on page 7)

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd greeted French President Jacques Chirac on Saturday at the start of his official visit to the desert kingdom which is expected to focus on closer political ties and security issues.

The two men hugged on greeting each other at Jeddah Airport.

Before Mr. Chirac's departure from France it was uncertain whether he would meet the monarch, who is 75 and suffered a stroke last year.

Mr. Chirac, accompanied by four cabinet ministers, is making his first visit to the oil-rich kingdom since he became head of state nearly 14 months ago. He had planned to visit Saudi Arabia earlier this year but cancelled when King Fahd fell ill.

Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said his

between equal partners" on Gulf security, Arab-Israeli peace and Bosnia.

On Mr. Chirac's agenda was a report to Saudi rulers on last week's summit in Lyon of the Group of Seven industrial nations, which pledged new efforts to fight political violence in the wake of last month's truck bomb attack at Dhahran military base in eastern Saudi Arabia in which 19 U.S. soldiers died. It is not clear who carried out the attack.

A bomb attack on a U.S.-assisted military training facility in Riyadh last November killed seven people.

France has 134 soldiers in Saudi Arabia.

French Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debré planned talks to expand a training and cooperation programme with

KABUL (R) — A new Afghan cabinet was sworn in on Saturday after a rebel rocket attack on Kabul killed up to 15 people and a top government commander was reported killed by his own bodyguards.

Official Kabul Radio said 15 people were killed and 40 wounded by rockets fired by the rebel Taleban Islamic militia, which has been besieging Kabul since October.

Hospital sources earlier said up to eight people were killed and 26 wounded in the attack, the most devastating on the city since new Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar took office 11 days ago.

Ten people were killed and eight wounded by one rocket that hit the Karte Ariana area of the city, the broadcast, monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, said.

There were conflicting reports about when the government commander organising anti-rebel resistance in the western province of Herat, General Alaudin, was killed.

Sources in Pakistan said he was killed on Thursday along with four bodyguards.

But a Pakistan-based Afghan news service quoted Herat province's Taleban governor, Mullah Yar Mohammad, as saying he was killed on Tuesday night at Spinghar Mountain in Pashun Zarghun district south of the provincial capital Herat.

The commander's relatives had been told to collect his body, the Afghan Islamic press quoted the governor as saying.

President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government sent Alaudin to the area before Herat fell to Taleban forces last September. Political sources said his death could be a great setback to the embattled government. Only six of nine ministers named on Wednesday took the oath at the presidential palace.

Government spokesmen said two of them were out of the country and one had stayed away because his party was

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedes are increasingly unhappy with their lot in life, finding fault not only with their work and money but also health and friends, according to a survey published Saturday. The *Dagens Nyheter* daily said that proportion of Sweden's 8.4 million people saying they were content with their lives had dropped a third since 1982 from 42 per cent to just 28 per cent. Only 16 per cent said they were satisfied with their financial situation and 25 per cent with their work, half the percentage who had expressed satisfaction over those aspects in 1982. Analysts blamed the dissatisfaction on unemployment, which was almost unknown in the 1980s but now affects 300,000 people, as well as on a perceived deterioration in economic conditions and social security.

HONG KONG (R). — Hong Kong's Equal Opportunities Commission has been forced to promise changes in a proposed dress code that would have allowed employers to force women to go to work in skirts and to bar them from wearing trousers. Commissioner Fanny Cheung said the draft code was too specific and must be rewritten, the daily South China Morning Post newspaper said Saturday. "The code should be more general by listing factors which employers should consider when a dress code is drafted," she said. She said the draft, written by consultants, did not necessarily reflect the views of the commission. Ms. Cheung was urged to resign by the vice-chairman of the Democratic Foundation lobby group. Francis Lun, who told government-run radio that she was out of touch and was unsuitable for such a politically sensitive post. The code, revealed Friday, would allow employers to force female staff to wear skirts because men can wear only trousers to work, not skirts. The embarrassing proposal came soon after a public furore forced a local securities house to drop a rule fining women for wearing trousers to the office.


TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's senior high school and junior college students are much more open in their attitude to sex than 12 years ago, the state-run Central News Agency quoted a new report as saying Saturday. The results were given by the Taiwan provincial government's Home Planning Research Organisation at a five-day Asian sex study seminar starting Saturday in Taipei, the agency said. Twelve per cent of the male students interviewed said they had sexual experience, up from six per cent in an investigation conducted in 1983, while seven per cent of the female students said they had experience, up from one per cent in 1983, it said. The investigation was conducted between November 1995 and March 1996 with 50,160 senior high school students and junior college students aged between 16 and 19. Twenty-one per cent of the male students interviewed said it was right to have sex when the two involved "liked" each other, up from eight per cent in 1983. For the female students, five per cent said so against one per cent in 1983.

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NA: No renegotiation
pullout from:

GALLAH: West Bank
— The Palestinian
National Authority (PNA)
and Israeli Prime Minister
Benjamin Netanyahu on
May 10 that it would refuse
to negotiate their agree-
ment on a troop withdrawal
from the West Bank town of
Jenin.
— Netanyahu is not ready to nego-
tiate and has already been
warned and "signed,"
— Defense Minister Nabil
Abu Jihad told the daily Al
Itan on the eve of Mr.
Netanyahu's first visit as
prime minister to the United
States.
— Abbas said this includ-
ing the Israeli army's
evacuation from the West
Bank and a safe passage
from Gaza and the West
Bank and the release of pris-
oners.
— Netanyahu must
"ambiguously respect" the
army accord signed by
prime minister Shimon
Peres and Palestinian Presi-
dent Yasser Arafat, Dr.
Gallah said.
— President Bill Clinton
has the night-wing
of the leader to spell out
the plan to proceed on
the Palestinian track when
he meets at the White
House Tuesday.
— Netanyahu has urged him
to implement the army rede-
ployment from Hebron
and should have taken
place before March 28 under
the autonomy accords,
— Netanyahu says he is

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MOGADISHU (AFP) — Heavy fighting involving four militias left at least 15 people dead and 65 wounded overnight and was continuing Saturday, witnesses said.

Demonstrators demanding that north Mogadishu strongman Ali Mahdi Mohammad mount an all-out offensive against south Mogadishu warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede meanwhile set up road-blocks in the north of the divided capital, smashed two official vehicles, and threw sticks and stones at Ali Mahdi's residence.

The fighting — with heavy machine-guns, 106mm recoilless rifles, 102mm mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and anti-aircraft missiles — began when General Aidede's militias advanced on the south Mogadishu enclave of Medina, inhabited by Abga clansmen loyal to Ali Mahdi.

It then spread to areas controlled by Osman Hassan Ali "Atto," once Aidede's financier but now a bitter foe, even though both men are members of the Saad subclan of the Habr Gedir.

On Saturday morning, Gen. Aidede's men exchanged heavy weapons fire across the green line with Ali Mahdi's militia men.

WAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti convert to Christianity declared an apostate by an Islamic court said on Saturday the ruling is in effect a death sentence and he feared for his life.

"Everyone is asking for my death," businessman Robert Hussein, 45, said in an interview. "A man has a right to life." "Everyone has accused me of apostasy... This a matter of life or death... They threatened me to death on May 29," he said.

The Shiite family court, ruling on a rare civil suit brought against Mr. Hussein by three Islamist lawyers, declared Mr. Hussein an apostate on May 29 in the first such finding by a court in the conservative Gulf Arab state.

The court imposed no penalty but ordered Mr. Hussein to pay the costs of case.

Mr. Hussein, a thin figure in Western clothes who lives in hiding for fear of his family, said he would appeal the ruling.

He said he intended also to launch a parallel appeal against the ruling in the constitutional court some time in September on the grounds that the constitution guaranteed freedom of belief.

Mr. Hussein said he wanted Kuwaiti authorities to say openly that he was protected by the constitution. "No official statement has come forward on my behalf to say this man is protected by the constitution," he said.

Kuwait's constitution says freedom of belief is absolute.

Public abandonment of Islam is extremely rare in the Arab World. Mr. Hussein's conversion has been denounced in mosques by preachers and by members of parliament. Mr. Hussein says one MP has called publicly for his killing.

Shiite family court judge Jaafar Al Mazidi said on May 29 that although Muslim apostasy is a crime, it is not

permission to kill Mr. Hussein, this would constitute a violation of criminal law and he did not believe Kuwaitis would do such a thing.

The Islamist lawyers who brought the suit against Mr. Hussein said they had been offended to hear of his conversion. They asked the court to declare him an apostate and to strip him of several civil rights including his nationality.

The lawyers said they did not want Mr. Hussein killed.

The Shi'ite family court ruled it had no jurisdiction in matters concerning rights such as nationality.

Mr. Hussein converted to Christianity from Shi'ite Islam more than a year ago and changed his name to Robert Hussein from Hussein Qambar Ali. He says he has received numerous death threats since newspapers last year reported his conversion.

He said he had recently received visits by American and British lawyers acting

had helped him prepare his appeal. Mr. Hussein says no Kuwaiti lawyer has agreed to take his case for fear of reprisals.

Mr. Hussein said on Saturday he never was a Muslim, arguing Islam was "imposed" on him by family and society and he never freely chose to follow the faith.

Mr. Hussein adds he cannot work and has not seen his children regularly because of his family's opposition to his conversion, which contributed to the breakup of his marriage last year.

He said he had received many letters of support from sympathisers including politicians in Western countries. One group had published his name and photograph on the Internet in appeal for international assistance, he said.

Western diplomats in Kuwait say they have discussed the case with government officials but decline to give further